The Eighth Book of Moses

A new translation and introduction

by Todd E. Klutz

The *Eighth Book of Moses* (hereafter *Moses VIII*) is important both as a witness to the rich interpenetration of Judaism and paganism in late antiquity, and as one of a small number of complete handbooks of magico-religious ritual that have survived from the same period. Although the text's self-designation as the *Eighth Book* seems to assume the existence of a sixth book and a seventh (in addition to the five books of the Pentateuch), historical evidence of ancient texts circulating under the title of either Moses' sixth or seventh book is lacking. Both *Moses VIII* (*PGM* XIII. 1-734) itself, however, and the textual material directly following it in the same papyrus codex[1] include references to other magico-religious writings associated with the name of Moses: *The Key (of Moses)* is cited six times in *Moses VIII* (lines 21-22, 31, 35-36, 60, 381-82, 431-32), and in the ensuing discourse mention is made of an *Archangelical Book of Moses* (XIII. 970-71), a *Secret Moon Book of Moses* (XIII. 1057), and perhaps (depending on how a single Greek letter is interpreted) also a *Secret Tenth Book of Moses* (XIII. 1077-78). The name "Moses" is also conspicuously conjoined with several of *Moses VIII*'s various self-designations;[2] and in two other passages the text is given titles that lack the name of Moses—*The Only* in XIII. 341, and *The Seven-Zoned* in XIII. 217, 723. The text's rhetoric of Mosaic authorship assumes a high degree of respect for Moses not only within Judaism but also in pagan circles, for the cultural and religious assumptions of the document as a whole are thoroughly hybridized rather than Jewish in any narrow sense. The ancient editors' attribution of the text to Moses in particular is undoubtedly motivated at least in part by a desire to enhance the authority and prestige of its contents.

Contents

The opening lines of *Moses VIII*, including the title, function much like an abstract, indicating that what follows will be concerned with a hierarchy of divine beings (including one that outranks all the others), with certain traditions allegedly associated with Moses, and with the name of the highest and most powerful god in the assumed context. Those concerns and related matters are then presented in the form of a recipe for a complex ritual process consisting of a combination of prescribed actions and formulaic utterances. One version of the recipe, corresponding to lines 1-343 (hereafter "version A") in the papyrus, has as its goal a revelatory encounter with "the god," who can be expected

1. *PGM* XIII. 734-1077 corresponds approximately to the final third of the text preserved in Leiden Papyrus J 395.

2. The variants including "Moses" are "a holy, secret book of Moses called *Eighth* or *Sacred* (XIII. 344-45); the *Only of Moses* (XIII. 724); the *Secret, Eighth of Moses* (XIII. 731); and the *Secret Book of Moses concerning the Great Name* (XIII. 732-33).

to disclose his own powerful name—an adaptable tool useful for everything from fetching a lover to resurrecting dead bodies—and to provide desired information about the initiate. A different version of the recipe, detailed in lines 343-734 (hereafter "version B"), has the same general revelatory aims but also expects the god to disclose details concerning the initiates' fate (e.g., their horoscope, where they will live, and where they will die) and a strategy for persuading the god to improve inauspicious oracles. The following table indicates the correspondences between versions A and B in the order of their occurrence in A.[3]

Version A	Version B	Content
1-4	343-47	Title and preview
4-8	347-49	Setting of initiation ritual
13-29	351-56	The seven types of incense
34-37	381-82	Names and spell in Moses' *Key*
38-60	383-432	Picture on the natron
61-87	568-600	Text on the natron
88-90	600-607	Powerful sounds and invitation
91-114	646-70	Additional materials for use in ritual
114-38	671-99	Ritual speech, sleep, and drink
128-31	360-63	Sacred gustable: beginning and end
138-61	443-71	Panlingual invocation
161-206	471-564	Creation by divine laughter
206-209	700-702	Vocalic imitation of the god
210-12	564-67	The revelatory event
213-24	718-30	Ascertaining the ruler of the moment
227-29	692-93	Recording the revelation
341-43	731-34	Coda

Even a cursory inspection of these parallels shows that the correspondences are substantial and at many points very close. Version B in particular contains little that is not present in version A. The most substantial passages unique to B are XIII. 610-45, detailing what the initiates should say and how they should breathe when the angel Sarapis appears; and XIII. 389-408, where ritual action prescribed in both versions (XIII. 38-44 and XIII. 383-88) is correlated with the cycle of the four seasons and the flooding of the Nile River.

A much larger proportion of version A consists of unique material. Most of that material is concentrated in a lengthy list of wonders (XIII. 230-340) which the text's users are promised they can achieve by following its instructions.

Manuscripts and Versions

The only extant witness to the text of *Moses VIII* is Leiden Papyrus J 395, a fourth-century C.E. codex whose contents are now best known as papyrus XIII in Karl Preisendanz's *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. Consisting of 1,077 lines of Greek text, the codex contains not only

3. The present table reflects the synoptic translation below and differs at several points, for reasons indicated below, from the summary by M. Q. Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses and How It Grew (Pleid. J 395)," *Atti del XVII congresso internazionale di papirologia* (ed. the International Congress of Papyrology; Naples: Centro internazionale per lo studio dei ercolanesi, 1984), 690-93; and in the form of Smith's annotations in *GMPT*, 182.

the two versions of *Moses VIII* (i.e., lines 1-734) summarised above but also another hybridised magico-religious handbook (lines 734-1,077) that includes a number of Jewish elements and several references to Moses in particular. The manuscript was part of the larger collection of Greco-Egyptian papyri brought together in the first quarter of the nineteenth century by the consular representative of Sweden at the court of Alexandria, a man who called himself Jean d'Anastasi (1780-1857).[4] The manuscript was transcribed in 1830 by the Dutch scholar C. J. C. Reuvens,[5] whose work on the text was soon reviewed and partially translated into German by K. O. Müller.[6] A complete edition, however, was not published until 1885, when both a corrected form of the text and a transcription of Leiden Papyrus J 384 (*PGM* XII) were made available by the Dutch Egyptologist C. Leemans.[7] Thereafter editions of the same two papyri were published by A. Dieterich (1891), K. Preisendanz, and most recently R. Daniel (1991).[8] The work by Daniel provides a photographic plate of each page of the Greek text and, on facing pages, a fresh transcription; it also includes a list of suggestions for improving the text printed in Preisendanz's influential edition, which served as the basis of the English translation by M. Q. Smith in H. D. Betz's *GMPT* (1986). At several points, therefore, Daniel's edition contributes to the *raison d'être* of the present translation.

As for the language of the text, the variety of Greek in several of the so-called "magical papyri" has been compared by A. Deissmann and others to the Koine dialect of the earliest Christian writings.[9] As far as such comparisons go, they illuminate the dialect realised in *Moses VIII* in particular. However, despite the standardisation that characterised the development of the Koine, variation in Greek continued throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods not only on the basis of differences between particular situations of communication (i.e., register) but also in accordance with more general considerations of geography (i.e., dialect). In that connection, the distinctively Egyptian contribution to the magico-religious synthesis of *Moses VIII* deserves more scholarly attention than it has received thus far;[10] for in addition to its interest to the historian of religion, it is realised largely by terms and phrases that collectively identify the variety of the text's language with late antique Egypt[11] far more closely than generalised talk about the international

4. The history of the manuscript's transmission from antiquity to modern times is shrouded in mystery; but a lively and informed reconstruction is offered by Betz, "Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri," *GMPT*, xlii-xliii.

5. C. J. C. Reuvens, *Lettres à M. Letronne, sur les Papyrus bilingues et Grecs, et sur quelques autres Monumens Gréco-Egyptiens du Musée d'Antiquités de l'Université de Leide* (Leiden: Luchtmans, 1830).

6. K. O. Müller, untitled piece in *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 56 (April 9, 1831): 545-54.

7. C. Leemans, *Papyri graeci musei antiquarii publici Lugduni-Batavi. Regis augustissimi jussu edidit, interpretationem latinam, annotationem, indicem et tabulas addidit C. Leemans* (2 vols.; Lugduni Batavorum: Brill, 1843, 1885).

8. A. Dieterich, *Abraxas: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des spätern Altertums* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1891); K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (3 vols.; rev. 2nd ed.; Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 1973-74); and R. Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden: A Photographic Edition of J 384 and J 395 (= PGM XII and XIII)* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 19; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991).

9. See, e.g., A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (4th ed.; trans. L. R. M. Strachan; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 142, 301-7.

10. On the role of indigenous Egyptian religion in the magical papyri generally, see Betz, "Introduction," *GMPT*, xlvi. On its role in *Moses VIII* more specifically, see *GMPT*, 173 nn. 13 and 15; 175 n. 30; 176, n. 34; 183 nn. 83 and 86; 184 n. 91.

11. Consider, e.g., the cumulative effect of the words translated "Egyptian bean" (22), "Manetho" (24),

character of either the Koine or "magic" would suggest. In the present context, however, we can do little more than stress that the language of *Moses VIII*, like that of the Greek magical papyri generally, is sorely in need of fresh description and analysis informed by recent linguistic discussions of dialect and register.[12]

In recent decades, scholarship on Leiden Papyrus J 395 has been unanimous in understanding the text's contents as including more than one version of *Moses VIII*. Precisely how many versions, however, and the degree of specificity with which a tradition history for those versions can be responsibly conjectured, are far from certain. As on a great many issues pertaining to *Moses VIII* so on these two in particular, the scholarly contributions of Morton Smith have special importance and deserve attention here. Most notably, both in the notes accompanying his English translation in *GMPT* and in an article published three years earlier, Smith departed from the mainstream of earlier scholarly opinion by:

- proposing that Leiden Papyrus J 395 includes not just two different versions of *Moses VIII* but three, namely lines 1-343 (labelled "A" by Smith), lines 343-646 (Smith's "B"), and lines 646-734 (Smith's "C");
- constructing a five-stage process of tradition history culminating in the production of our manuscript; and
- postulating the existence of a single basic text of which our extant versions are variants, and whose contents and purpose can be reconstructed.[13]

Smith's views on these issues have strongly influenced the most important study recently published on *Moses VIII*;[14] yet a different understanding is reflected in the translation and accompanying notes below. Because Smith's opinions concerning the tradition history of *Moses VIII* and his implicit theory of translation affect one another at a deep level, the main weaknesses of his position ought to be noted.

Most of the difficulties in Smith's interpretation stem from his controversial judgement that lines 646-734 constitute by themselves a whole distinct version of *Moses VIII* (i.e., Smith's version "C"), rather than forming the end of a much lengthier version that begins in the middle of line 343. Against the existence of Smith's C, and as his very own synopsis of the three hypothetical versions well illustrates, all the parallels to his version "C" except one are found not in "B" (343-646) but rather in "A" (1-343);[15] and since both "A" and "B" (as defined by Smith) individually contain doublets, the negligible amount of material found both in 343-646 and 646-734 can easily be construed as a doublet within 343-734, viewed as a single version.

Furthermore, by interpreting the end of line 646 as the beginning of his version "C," Smith requires his version "B" (i.e., 343-646) to conclude unsatisfactorily, namely with an

---

"Egyptian flail" (34), "falcon-faced crocodile" (41 and passim), "the nine-formed god" (42 and passim), "Achebukrōm" (141 and passim), "Anok" (150 and passim), and "hippopotamus" (309-18). A full study of dialect, of course, would be obligated to consider not only vocabulary but also grammar.

12. See, e.g., R. A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics* (2nd ed.; Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38-50.

13. See Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 683-88.

14. B. J. L. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses (PLeid. J 395): Hellenistic Jewish Influence in a Pagan Magical Papyrus," in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment* (ed. M. Labahn and B. J. L. Peerbolte; London: T.&T. Clark, 2007), 189-90.

15. See Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 690-93. Lines 688-92 are parallel in thought both to lines 131-34 and lines 434-37, while lines 704-5 are broadly similar both to lines 210-11 and to lines 564-65.

unremarkable ritual utterance rather than with the dramatic revelatory encounter promised at the beginning of "B" in its abstract (345-47); whereas if, contra Smith, "B" is understood to conclude in line 734 rather than line 646, its ending is just as conventional, functional, and satisfying as the ending of "A" is. Third, the beginning of Smith's version "C" (646 ff.) neither parallels the beginnings of versions "A" and "B" (both of which open with a titular abstract followed by a prescription for ritual purification) nor functions as an abstract or orientation for the putative version as a whole; moreover, the first clause of that same beginning in the Greek text of Smith's "C" includes a connective particle which serves, against Smith's thesis, to link together what precedes (i.e., in "B") and what follows (i.e., in "C"), and immediately afterwards the Greek verb translated "he says" has an unexpressed subject that can only be identified by reading the same clause in the light of the ending of "B," a strategy that should not be necessary if Smith's hypothesis were correct.

Fourth, just as the phrase "as I said before" in lines 114-15 refers to antecedent discourse found in lines 4-8, so also the parallel phrase in line 671 refers to antecedent discourse found in lines 347-50,[16] forming a reference chain that connects part of Smith's version C (line 671) to the beginning of "B" (347-50) and thus undermines the very idea of "C" as a version in its own right.[17] And finally, when lines 345-47 are recognised as an abstract previewing the programme of discourse that follows in the co-text, and thus also as promising that both a ritual pertaining to "the name" and a procedure for facilitating a revelatory "meeting" are to follow, the occurrences of the phrase "When the god enters" both in lines 564-65 and in line 704 can be construed as introducing parallel fulfilments of the prior two-sided promise, with lines 564-65 introducing the disclosure of the name, and line 704 marking the beginning of the revelatory "meeting." The overall effect of this feature is to produce a schematic structure that ties together the abstract of "B" (lines 345-47) and lines 564-65 and 704 into a single, largely coherent macrostructure, an effect that militates strongly against Smith's notion of a third version of *Moses VIII* in Leiden Papyrus J 395.

Thus, instead of following Smith and taking lines 343-734 as consisting of two versions (i.e., "B" and "C"), the present interpretation construes the same lines as belonging to a single version, which for sake of convenience is referred to below as "B."

Genre, Structure, and Prosody

The amount of scholarly attention devoted to *Moses VIII*'s literary genre pales into insignificance by comparison with the volume of discussion given to its sources and tradition history. Indeed, in scholarship published to date on *Moses VIII* no sustained attention has been given to the text's genre. To be sure, summaries have been given of the text's content, and scattered comments have been made on its function as a whole and on the purpose of some of its parts; but the kind of comparative analysis required by careful genre criticism, whereby all of *Moses VIII* would be compared with other documents similar to it and of known literary genre, is still awaited. Until a thorough study of this matter becomes available, little can be done beyond trying to synthesise a recent scholarly attempt to classify a small set of broadly similar texts from late antiquity, a few comparative observations on

16. Cf. W. M. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey: Annotated Bibliography (1928-1994)," in *ANRW* 18.5: 3539.

17. Indeed, if the phrase "as I said before" in line 671 is not understood as referring (as suggested above) to lines 347-50, it causes that part of Smith's version "C" to be incoherent, a quality which Smith undoubtedly attributed to *Moses VIII* more often than is necessary.

two of those texts in particular, and a proposal concerning the way in which the creation account embedded in both versions of *Moses VIII* (i.e., "A" and "B") might be related to the instructions surrounding them in each case.

In a recent treatment of so-called "magical manuals" from late antiquity, P. S. Alexander has proposed that such texts should be classified as consisting of two broad subtypes, namely "books of recipes" on the one hand and "books of magical theology" on the other hand.[18] The former category Alexander defines as "collections of incantations" presented in the style of master copies, whose blank forms (e.g., "N son of N") would have been personalised when the master was copied onto an amulet for a particular client.[19] These collections are, according to Alexander, more directly pragmatic and less explicitly theoretical than are texts such as *Sefer ha-Razim*, *Harba di-Moshe*, the *Great Magical Papyrus of Paris* (especially the *Mithras Liturgy*), and the *Testament of Solomon*. This latter group of documents, especially *Sefer ha-Razim* and the *Mithras Liturgy*,[20] provides what are probably the closest parallels available for comparative study of *Moses VIII* and could be expanded so as to make room for our text without doing violence to the boundaries of the genre. *Sefer ha-Razim*, in fact, is the only text that scholars have mentioned in connection with the genre of *Moses VIII*;[21] but unfortunately such references have not been developed into anything resembling a sustained comparative analysis of the two texts. In lieu of that sort of treatment, but also as a step in that direction, the following list of resemblances may prove illuminating.

The narrators of both *Moses VIII* and *Sefer ha-Razim* explicitly define themselves by association with a range of earlier traditions and legendary agents of cosmic power, with figures from the history of Israel, and Moses in particular, being named in both.[22] In contrast moreover to both *Harba di-Moshe* and the *Testament of Solomon* (especially chapters 1–18), which are united in general by a prominent interest in the activities of demonic beings, both *Moses VIII* (especially version "A") and *Sefer ha-Razim* transmit ritual procedures and formulaic utterances for performance in a great variety of situations, many of which have nothing to do with evil spirits or the misfortunes they cause.[23] The same two documents also share a strong interest in ritual activities that have revelatory aims.[24] And finally, tabular lists of the names and identities of important cosmic powers are provided in both texts so that users might avail themselves of the knowledge essential to achieving the respective pragmatic goals envisaged in the text.[25] Of course, none of these features is so unusual as to be highly significant by itself for purposes of genre criticism; but consid-

18. P. S. Alexander, "Contextualising the Demonology of the *Testament of Solomon*," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der alttestamentlich-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (ed. A. Lange; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 614-15.

19. Alexander, "Contextualising the Demonology of the *Testament of Solomon*," 614; cf. M. Meyer and R. Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 7.

20. The *Testament of Solomon* is excluded from consideration because, as the present writer has argued elsewhere (T. Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon* [LSTS 53; London: T.&T. Clark, 2005], 14-19, 68-69), its long forms are too literarily complex to be satisfactorily categorised as an example of a "book of magical theology." Like the *Testament*, moreover, *Harba di-Moshe* differs strikingly not only from *ShR* and the *Mithras Liturgy* but also from *Moses VIII* by virtue of the high prominence it assigns to demonology.

21. See Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 192.

22. E.g., *PGM* XIII. 21, 382-83; and *ShR* preface lines 1-30.

23. E.g., *PGM* XIII. 234-42; and *ShR* 1.84-106.

24. E.g., *PGM* XIII. 38-212, 345-567; *ShR* 4.25-42.

25. E.g., *PGM* XIII. 217-24, 722-30; and *ShR* 1.18-26; 2.12-14; 3.13-16; and passim.

ered collectively, they serve to distinguish *Moses VIII* and *Sefer ha-Razim* from other late antique handbooks of ritual power, including even works such as *Harba di-Moshe* and the *Testament of Solomon*.

However, like most texts consisting of more than a few clauses, *Moses VIII* is an interdiscursive combination of various linguistic registers and literary sub-genres (e.g., ritual prescriptions, prayers, incantations, astrological treatise, creation myths). Both the interplay between these different styles and their dialogical impact on the force of *Moses VIII* as a whole would therefore require close attention in anything resembling a full discourse analysis of the text. In that connection special consideration should probably be devoted to the presence and communicative force of the creation myth embedded roughly in the middle of each of the text's two versions.[26] Sandwiched in each case between a ritual recipe and instruction concerning how to behave when the climactic revelation takes place, the creation story may be intended to suggest that the same kind of power realised in the creation of the cosmos is now to be re-actualised in the context of the user of *Moses VIII* as a result of the power inherent in the story itself. Perhaps because the events of creation were understood to involve no small display of divine power, creation myths had great appeal for adaptation and redeployment by ancient authors of incantation texts and magico-religious handbooks. In modern study of ancient texts of ritual power, instances of this particular type of mythic intertextuality have been grouped together to form a literary sub-genre known as "historiola formulas";[27] historiolas are present in many late antique and medieval incantatory texts, so that suitable material for comparative study of lines 138-206 and 443-564 in *Moses VIII* is not in short supply.[28]

Date and Provenance

Recent scholarship on Leiden Papyrus J 395 is unanimous with regard to the setting within which the text of both versions of *Moses VIII* was inscribed. There is general agreement that the codex as a whole is from the fourth century C.E., and that the hand responsible for all but a few lines of *Moses VIII* is typical of writing from around 350 C.E.[29] From the earliest phase of research to the present, moreover, no challenge has been raised against the notion of a broadly Egyptian provenance for both the extant text itself and the composition assumed to lie behind it;[30] in this latter connection *Moses VIII* is representative of the Greek magical papyri more generally.

The current consensus about the date of the manuscript constitutes a change, albeit a minor one, in scholarly opinion, with research prior to the 1980s having suggested a slightly earlier range of dates (third or fourth century C.E.) than that agreed more re-

26. Lines 138-206, and 443-564. The feature is mentioned briefly by J. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 146, but has never been discussed satisfactorily in terms of its impact on the force of the text as a whole.

27. See, e.g., G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 312-14; and D. Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (ed. M. Meyer and P. Mirecki; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 457-76.

28. See, e.g., Oxyrynchus 1077 (Preizendanz, *PGM*, 2:211); Cairo 10263 (Preizendanz, *PGM*, 2:220-22); Berlin 11858 (Preizendanz, *PGM*, 2:231-32); and *PGM* IV.94-153. English translations of the first three of these are available in Meyer and Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic*, 33-36.

29. See, e.g., Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 190; *GMPT*, 181, 184 n. 92; and Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, x-xi.

30. Betz, "Introduction," xlv-l.

cently.[31] This shift in favour of a later dating of the extant text, however, has been accompanied by a tendency to postulate several stages of redaction, or literary "generations," going backward in time four or five generations to a hypothesised *Ur*-text, postulated as originating in the second century C.E. (or perhaps even the first) and assumed to be largely recoverable through processes of source and redaction criticism. Smith, for instance, proposes a multi-stage tradition history largely on the basis of his own thesis that *PGM* XIII. 1-734 consists of not merely two versions of *Moses VIII* but three,[32] a thesis already criticised above as vulnerable on both linguistic and historical grounds. Smith's programme of dating the literary sources of the magical papyri earlier than the evidence requires may be explained, at least in part, by reference to his controversial study *Jesus the Magician* (1978), in which comparison of the magical papyri (and *Moses VIII* in particular) and the New Testament Gospels is casually interpreted as supporting very early datings of the sources embedded in the former.[33]

A more specific example of the same tendency is Smith's suggestion that the original version behind all or part of version B should perhaps be dated to 139 C.E., a date suggested by a possible correspondence between the festival of the "birth of Horus" (alluded to in XIII. 386-94) on the twenty-eighth day of Pharmuthi on the one hand and March 21 on the other hand, the date of the spring equinox in "an ideal year."[34] Although Smith's interpretation of the meteorological discourse in this passage is not implausible, alternative readings that are equally defensible have been offered by others,[35] and his willingness in this connection to assume meteorological competence on the part of the ancient author deviates strikingly from his own lack of "initiative trust"[36] with regard to the text's worldview at so many other points.[37]

One other argument for postulating a very early (first or second century C.E.) original behind the extant versions deserves at least brief attention here. The argument in question focuses on the several items scattered throughout the text that have associations with the religious ideas and institutions of Judaism in particular. More specifically, according to a recent study of *Moses VIII* by B. J. L. Peerbolte, the several references to Moses and ancient writings attributed to him (see above), the occurrence of "magical phonemes" derived from Hebrew words,[38] and the reference to "the temple of Jerusalem" (line 233) have a cumulative effect of making the Jewish aspects of the text more prominent than previous interpreters have allowed.[39] A type of cultural hybridity in which Judaism plays a lively role is therefore understood by Peerbolte as being essential to the implied context, an en-

---

31. Third or fourth century: Preisendanz, "Die griechischen Zauberpapyri," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 8 (1927), 122-23; and Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 146.

32. See Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 683-88.

33. See M. Q. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 136.

34. *GMPT*, 183 n. 81.

35. The German translation of XIII. 389–90 in Preisendanz, *PGM*, 2:107, interprets "the birth of Horus" as the winter solstice ("Winterwende") rather than the spring equinox.

36. The phrase is borrowed from George Steiner (*After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* [3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 312-13), who uses it to denote the first move in every successful act of translation, namely the translator's operative assumption that the source text is coherent, meaningful and, however foreign or strange its assumptions might be, capable of being understood.

37. A particularly striking example is Smith's description of the reference in XIII. 233 to the Jerusalem temple as "pretentious hokum" (*GMPT*, 179 n. 56).

38. E.g., *Adōnaie Basemmiaō* in XIII. 147.

39. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 190-91.

vironment characterised by vibrant exchange between Jewish and pagan "magicians," with the magico-religious synthesis of *Moses VIII* in particular being "somehow connected to Judaism" and "perhaps even to the period of the Second Temple."[40] Although Peerbolte does not interpret the reference to the temple in particular as entailing that the temple was still standing when the original of *Moses VIII* was composed, he does understand it as implying a context in which the temple was still held in high esteem and considered spiritually important, a context that in his mind is better suited to a first- or second-century dating than to a third- or fourth-century one.[41] However, what Peerbolte's proposal overlooks is that both the reference to the temple in line 233 and the other Jewish elements just mentioned serve in good measure to enhance the prestige and authority of the text itself, so that the temple reference in particular is better understood as part of a rhetoric of ancient (and thus venerable) origins than as some innocent reflection of the document's historical context or date of composition.[42]

The scholarly consensus in favour of a broadly Egyptian provenance for the composition of *Moses VIII* is reinforced by the comments above concerning the text's dialect. The consensus is therefore accepted without criticism in the present context; however, evidence in favour of a more specific setting within Egypt should not be overlooked. Most notably, a mid-nineteenth-century catalogue of the Anastasi collection indicates that at least a substantial part of the corpus was obtained in Thebes, where only a few years earlier a contemporary of Anastasi's had collected various papyri recovered from local tombs and their immediate environs.[43] If *Moses VIII* in particular was composed in or near Thebes, the reference in lines 394 and 407 to the Nile River simply as "the water" would not have been unintelligible to the text's earliest users but rather would have made sense as an instance of presupposed local knowledge.[44] Of course, this particular feature would cohere not only with a Theban setting but with any settled area near the Nile. Still, taken in conjunction with the nineteenth-century reports that mention Theban tombs, these references to the Nile warrant at least a tentative conjecture that Thebes in particular may have been the place of our text's composition.

Literary Context

Moses VIII is best interpreted as assuming knowledge of a range of other texts and discourses even though most of these are not cited directly or even clearly alluded to. For instance, the combination of Mosaic pseudepigraphy, interest in the power of divine names, and formulaic use of the Hebraism *Adōnaie Basēmmiaō* may be influenced at least indirectly by the biblical portrayal of Moses as experiencing a revelation of the divine name at his calling in Egypt (Exod 3:13-15).[45] The reference in line 233 to the Jerusalem temple, moreover, belongs to a whole set of features that have specifically either Jewish or Christian overtones and are present only in version A. Although the meaning

40. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 190-91.

41. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 191-92.

42. As indicated below in the proposed translation of lines 233, an even better interpretation of the temple reference is to construe the preposition *en* + dative noun (*hierō*) in that context not as locative ("in the temple") but rather as instrumental ("by the temple"), a reading which obviates the charge of anachronism whilst preserving the archaising air of the reference.

43. As noted by Betz, "Introduction," *GMPT*, xlii-xlvii, l. n. 12.

44. On "the water" as the Nile, see *GMPT*, 183 n. 83.

45. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 187.

of those lines is less clear than recent translations suggest, the temple reference is undoubtedly dependent on biblical and related traditions rather than on direct experience. Similarly, the prescribed utterance "I am he on the two cherubim" in lines 254-55 and 334 echoes a motif found in several passages of Jewish Scripture.[46] And the invocation of Christ in line 289, embedded as it is in a formula for effecting "release from chains" (line 288), should perhaps be read as echoing the stories of prison release in the Acts of the Apostles.[47]

Because each of these last three features contributes to the distinctiveness of version A, they might be read collectively as the work of a redactor whose aim was to make traditions such as those in version B more palatable to ordinary Christians, many of whom would have seen magico-ritual performances of cosmic power as essential to their religious practice,[48] and for whom the Jewish biblical motifs just summarised would have possessed positive significance. Version A, after all, has been interpreted generally by Smith as the reworking of an edition very similar to B; and just as earliest Christianity sometimes understood itself as winning people who formerly trafficked in demonic "magic" and books of ritual power,[49] so also dealers in magico-religious handbooks and incantations would have seen the Christ cult as a promising market for their wares. That market would have been especially attractive around the time accepted above as the date of the production of Leiden papyrus J 395, near the middle of the fourth century C.E., when the numerical growth of Christian converts in the immediately preceding decades was so great that nearly half the population of the empire may have been Christian in one sense or another by 350 C.E.[50]

Of course, it should not be overlooked that most of the motifs just discussed are not distinctively Christian but rather Jewish. Those elements in *Moses VIII* cannot be fully explained in terms of Jewish biblical sources but rather presuppose a late antique cultural milieu close to that realised, for instance, in *Sefer ha-Razim* (discussed above), in the Hekhalot texts, and in the numerous incantation bowls and amulets published in recent years by Joseph Naveh, Shaul Shaked, and others.[51] All of those materials are products of a Judaism that has been greatly enriched by its interchange with other varieties of religion and culture in the same environment; yet none of those texts is as overtly hybridised as *Moses VIII*, which as a whole defies classification as either a Christian or a Jewish document.[52]

Accordingly, no discussion of the literary context of *Moses VIII* can afford to neglect the text's several allusions to ancient works whose outlook is less Jewish or Christian than pagan. In that connection special mention should be made of the so-called *Secret Tenth Book of Moses* (hereafter *Moses X*), known only in the form of the Greek text that directly follows the end of version B of *Moses VIII* and constitutes the final unit of discourse in

---

46. E.g., Exod 25:22; Num 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Chr 13:6; Ps 80:2 [Evv 80:1]; 99:1; Isa 37:16; Ezek 9:3; 10:18-19; Dan 3:55 LXX. See *GMPT*, 179 n. 64.

47. See Acts 5:17-26; 12:1-19; and 16:19-40.

48. See, e.g., the numerous Christian spells of protection, healing, and cursing in Meyer and Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic*, passim.

49. See, e.g., Acts 19:13-20.

50. See, e.g., R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 4-13.

51. For example, J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magness, 1993), 17-20; and D. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 14-17.

52. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 135-36.

Leiden Papyrus J 395 (*PGM* XIII. 734-1077). Both the abruptness of *Moses X*'s beginning—the opening lines constitute neither an abstract nor anything resembling an orientation—and the presence of linguistic features which tie the beginning of that document to version B of *Moses VIII*,[53] give the impression that the author/editor of *Moses X* knows *Moses VIII* (or at least its ending) and expects his reader to know it too. Although *Moses X* does not substantially replicate material from either version of *Moses VIII*,[54] it resembles both versions of the latter in terms of length and literary genre. There is also a notable resemblance with regard to degrees of religious hybridity, with positive references in *Moses X* to Zeus, Zoroaster, and "Orpheus the revealer," for instance, occurring alongside appeals to Michael, "the great name . . . in Jerusalem," and "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Despite the striking cultural heterogeneity of *Moses VIII*, a contextually sensitive reading of the text's several references to the *Key of Moses* indicates that the author/editor of *Moses VIII* did not view the figure of Moses as merely another name of cosmic power for some syncretistic cocktail but rather understood it as uniquely holy and honourable. Most notably, the titular collocation of "key" and "Moses" probably derives part of its meaning from the ancient rivalry between Moses and Hermes, the latter being understood in broadly contemporaneous Greco-Egyptian literature as the author of the *Key of Hermes Trismegistus*.[55] The rivalry between Moses and Hermes is attested more explicitly in the apologetic Moses romance *Artapanus* 3.27.6, 9.[56] *Moses VIII* itself yields almost no insight into the specific contents of the *Key*;[57] but because detailed knowledge of select instructions prescribed in the *Key* is presented in lines 31 and 35-36 of *Moses VIII* as essential to success in performing the ritual outlined in that context, the non-existence of such a text is highly improbable. The *Key* almost certainly was circulating in the milieu in which *Moses VIII* was composed and edited.

The sense of rivalry just noted between Moses and Hermes is conveyed more explicitly in lines 14-16. In that context, after acknowledging that the information he is about to disclose regarding the seven secret incenses is given not only in his own text but also in a Hermetic document known simply as *Wing*, the author of *Moses VIII* tries to undermine the Hermetic book's authority by claiming that its author stole his information about the incenses from the text of *Moses VIII*. Clearly, though, this accusation presupposes that, in *Moses VIII*'s implied context of editing, Hermes' *Wing* was already in existence;[58] accordingly, the possibility that *Wing* did not in fact plagiarise *Moses VIII* but instead antedated

53. E.g., the lexical string "child" in lines 719 and 734, and the reference chain effected by "this vision" in lines 734-35, which creates a cohesive tie with the visionary content of lines 704-17.

54. The point is well made by Smith, *GMPT*, 195 n. 146, where the distinctiveness of *PGM* XIII. 734-1077 is cited against the attempt by Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 148, to interpret line 1077 as referring to the eighth book rather than to a tenth.

55. Cf. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 149, citing the title of the tenth tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

56. Peerbolte, "The Eighth Book of Moses," 190.

57. An exception is present in lines 21-24, where the ritual instruction pertaining to the use of "sun vetch" is presented both as derived from the *Key* and as consonant with directions allegedly found in a work by the third-century-B.C.E Egyptian priest and historian Manetho. Like Moses, Manetho was widely esteemed, and various astrological and magico-religious texts were posthumously attributed to him; but from the information in lines 21-24 it is impossible to ascertain which book by Manetho the author of *Moses VIII* had in mind.

58. The point acquires additional significance when one recognises that, as noted by Smith, *GMPT*, 172 n. 6, the existence of *Wing* is not attested in ancient sources other than *Moses VIII*.

it and perhaps even served as a source for the latter, at least with regard to the seven types of incense, should not be dismissed lightly.

A full treatment of the literary environment of *Moses VIII* would deal with texts which our document does not mention by name, but which none the less have conditioned its production and reception in various ways. Examples include the creation narrative in both version A and B (lines 138-206, 443-564), which parallels existing Judaeo-Egyptian accounts such as that in *2 Enoch* 25–30;[59] the diverse prescriptions in lines 230-340, which are highly formulaic in style and probably derived from other ritual handbooks known to the author; and the astrological table referred to as the "Seven-Zoned" in line 217 (par. 723), whose purpose is to enable its users to identify on any given day which of seven Greek gods rules the day (and by extension which god rules the celestial pole on that same day).[60] But more important for the present study, even the introductory discussion here has been able to highlight the complexity of *Moses VIII*'s literary and socio-cultural context. In that environment, ideas and symbols of Jewish origin could be freely combined with Greco-Egyptian ideas, while Moses' name and related Jewish symbols could be presented in the same discourse as uniquely powerful.

Bibliography

Betz, H. D., ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Bohak, G. *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Brashear, W. M. "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey: Annotated Bibliography (1928-1994)." *ANRW* 18.5: 3380-3730. Part 2, Principat, 18.1. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986.

Daniel, R. W., ed. *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden: A Photographic Edition of J 384 and J 395 (= PGM XII and XIII)*. Papyrologica Coloniensia 19. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991.

Dieterich, A. *Abraxas: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des spätern Altertums*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1891.

Gager, J. G. *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.

Leemans, C. *Papyri graeci musei antiquarii publici Lugduni-Batavi. Regis augustissimi jussu edidit, interpretationem latinam, annotationem, indicem et tabulas addidit C. Leemans*. 2 vols. Lugduni Batavorum: Brill, 1843, 1885.

Merkelbach, R., and M. Totti, eds. *Abrasax: Ausgewählte Papyri religiösen und magischen Inhalts*. Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Sonderreihe Papirologica Coloniensia 17/1. Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990.

Peerbolte, B. J. L. "The Eighth Book of Moses (PLeid. J 395): Hellenistic Jewish Influence in a Pagan Magical Papyrus." Pages 184-94 in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment*. Edited by M. Labahn and B. J. L. Peerbolte. London: T.&T. Clark, 2007.

Preisendanz, K. "Die griechischen Zauberpapyri." *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 8 (1927): 104-67.

Preisendanz, K., and A. Henrichs, eds. *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*. 2nd ed. 3 vols. Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 1973-74.

Reuvens, C. J. C. *Lettres à M. Letronne, sur les Papyrus bilingues et Grecs, et sur quelques autres*

59. Smith, *GMPT*, 176 n. 43.

60. Cf. Smith, *GMPT*, 178 n. 54.

Monumens Grèco-Egyptiens du Musée d'Antiquités de l'Université de Leide. Leiden: Luchtmans, 1830.

Smith, M. Q. "The Eighth Book of Moses and How It Grew (Pleid. J 395)." Pages 683-93 in *Atti del XVII congresso internazionale di papirologia*. Edited by the International Congress of Papyrology. Naples: Centro internazionale per lo studio dei ercolanesi, 1984.

The Eighth Book of Moses — Version A (Lines 1-343)

Title (lines 1-4)

God •gods.[a] •A holy book called *The Only* or *The Eighth of Moses*, •concerning the sacred name. It contains what follows here.

The Right Time and Place for Successful Initiation (lines 4-8)

Stay pure [5]forty-one days, having reckoned[b] them beforehand so that their completion arrives in the lunar conjunction that happens in •Aries.

Have a ground-level dwelling, where no one has died during •the past year. Let the door be placed •looking west.

Essential Materials for the Initiation (lines 8-29)

Now set up in the middle of the dwelling an earthen altar •and cypress wood, ten pinecones on the right,[c] two [10]white roosters undamaged and spotless, and two lamps •filled with good oil and holding in total one fourth of a part. And •pour in no more than that; for when the god enters, their flame •will be intensified.

Let the table be prepared with these following types of incense, •which are congenial to the god—from this [15]book Hermes thieved when he named the seven types of incense in •his own holy book called *Wing*—•to Kronos, styrax, for it is heavy and fragrant; to Zeus, •malabathron;[d] to Ares, kostos; to Hēlios-Sun, frankincense; •to Aphrodite, Indian nard; to Hermes, cassia; [20]to Selēnē-Moon,[e] myrrh. These are the secret incenses. •Now Moses says in the *Key*,[f] "On every •occasion prepare sun vetch," by which he speaks of the Egyp-

---

a. Smith (*GMPT*, 172 n. 1) mentions epigraphic parallels to the occurrence of the plural at the beginning and infers "literary and philosophical pretensions" from the placement of the singular; but in terms of literary structure and coherence, the combination as a whole reliably anticipates the cosmology implied in the rest of the text, namely one in which numerous divine beings speak and act, with one deity in particular understood to be greater than the rest (see, e.g., lines 138-212).

b. Contra Preisendanz, *PGM* II.87-88, and as reflected in *GMPT*, 172, the participle here rendered "reckoned" is not an adjective that qualifies "days," but rather is adverbial and qualifies "Stay."

c. Neither Smith's "ten pinecones full of seed" (*GMPT*, 172) nor Preisendanz's German ("zehn vollsamige Tannenzapfen," *PGM* II.88) does justice to the spatial connotations of the Greek word *dexious*.

d. Possibly a type of cinnamon in oily form.

e. Represented in the manuscript not verbally but rather pictographically, as a crescent-shaped moon.

f. The *Key of Moses* is discussed above in the "Introduction." The combination of present tense *legei* ("says") and the separation of the article from its noun ("Moses") serves to foreground the importance and

The Eighth Book of Moses — Version B (Lines 343-734)

Title and Preview (lines 343-47)

A holy, •secret book of Moses called *Eighth* or *Sacred*. [345]Its subject matter is the effect of the •name that encompasses all things. The book contains instructions by which •you might achieve the effect if you leave out nothing that is required.

First Stage of Ritual Preparations for Initiation (lines 347-49)

Keep yourself pure forty-one days, •having reckoned the day and the hour in which •the moon must undergo eclipse in Aries.

Lines 349-57

Whenever (the eclipse[a]) is expected to take place [350]in Aries, sleep on the ground the previous night and, when you have offered sacrifice, burn •the seven original types of incense in which •the god takes pleasure, for the seven censings of the seven stars. •The incenses are these: malabathron, styrax, nard, kostos, •cassia, frankincense, myrrh; and the seven flowers of the seven [355]stars, which are rose, lotus, narcissus, lily, •Roselle fruit, gilliflower, marjoram.

a. Against Smith (*GMPT*, 182), who understands the unexpressed subject of the verb to be "the moon," considerations of both word order and syntax favour taking the eclipse event as the subject.

tian bean;[a] •and having stolen the same instructions from the *Key*,[b] •Manetho spoke about these things in his own book.[c]

The seven stars correspond to the seven flowers,[d] which are marjoram, [25]lily, lotus, roselle fruit,[e] narcissus, •gilliflower, rose. Twenty-one •days before the initiation, grind these flowers into a white •mortar and dry them in the shade and have them ready for •that day.

Connecting with the Gods of the Hours (lines 29-34)

But first, at [30]whatever new moon is fortune's favourite, get yourself connected to the •gods of the hours, whom you have in the *Key*. You will be initiated with respect to them as follows: •Make three figures from the finest flour, one bull-faced, one •goat-faced, one ram-faced, each one of them standing •on the pole of the celestial axis and holding Egyptian flails.

Lines 100-102

Also have •a cinnamon hanging down from your neck; for •the deity is pleased by it and granted it power.

Lines 128-131

Have a mixing bowl •lying close at hand and containing [130]milk from a black cow and wine without seawater, for this is beginning •and end.

---

abiding relevance of Moses as author of the *Key*, which is described as superior in authenticity and value to the discourse of Manetho mentioned in the ensuing lines.

a. A plant of uncertain identity, but possibly the perennial twining vine *Lablab purpureus*, which produces edible seeds and attaches itself to nearby surfaces for support.

b. Cf. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3539. The clause effects an important correspondence between Hermes in line 14 and Manetho in the present context, both of whom are portrayed as having plagiarised from the *Key of Moses*.

c. In order to convey coherent meaning in English, the translation of lines 23-24 above reverses the clause order of the Greek text.

d. The Greek of this clause is elliptical and impossible to render into intelligible English without inferring the notion of cosmic sympathy—in this instance, more specifically cosmic correspondences between stars and plants—on which see T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 103-4.

e. Unattested in other ancient Greek texts, so the translation here is conjectural; but since the text offers no explanation, the flower was most likely well-known in the implied setting, so that the exotic overtones of Smith's transliteration (*erephyllinos*) are probably misleading.

Having ground them into a fine powder, •offer all of it with wine undiluted by seawater.

Lines 358-63

•Also wear cinnamon, for the god has clothed it with special power. •Burn the incenses [360]after the twenty-first day in order to conclude that part of the ritual.

With respect to the gustable,[a] •partake of black cow's milk, wine without seawater, •and Greek natron — it indicates what is beginning •and end.

Instructions concerning the Required Sacrifice (lines 363-82)

Whenever the day has arrived, set out •cypress or balsam wood for the sacrifice so that even [365]without the incenses the sacrifice will give off a good scent, •and also set out five pinecones on the right. Also light two lamps, •each holding half a pint of oil, on this side and that of the altar. The altar •should be made of earth. Having prepared and filled the lamps, •pour no further oil into them later. Sacrifice a white [370]unblemished rooster, and let another go free, and •likewise sacrifice a pigeon (and let another go free), so that the god, when he enters, can take the spirit of whichever he prefers. •A knife also should be laid out, and beside it should be laid out both •the seven incenses and the seven flowers prepared as set forth above, •so that if, when the god enters, he wishes to sacrifice again, [375]he might find everything ready. And the sacrifice should be left lying out on the altar.

•Now the tasting is to be done as follows: Whenever you are •to perform the tasting, sacrifice the rooster so that the god might receive plenty •of spirit. And just when you are about to taste, call upon both the •god of the hour and him of the day in order to be recommended by them. For unless you invoke them, [380]they will not listen to you, treating you as one who is uninitiated.

a. *GMPT*, 182, has simply "food"; but instead of the ordinary term for food, the Greek noun here is a word that connotes the sensory, and more specifically gustatory, aspect of food, one consequence being that the prescribed ritual is an event powerfully affecting the sense not only of smell (e.g., burnt incense) but also of taste.

Lines 34-37

And [35]when you have surrounded them with burning incense, eat them and pronounce the formula for the gods of the hours—this is •in the *Key*—both the spell[a] for coercing them and the names of the gods •appointed over the weeks.[b] And thus you will have been initiated with respect to them.

Picture and Text on the Natron Square (lines 38-90)

•Next, for the standard meeting have a natron square, •into which you will scratch[c] the great name with the seven vowels.

Now instead of [40]the snapping[d] and the hissing sounds, sketch into one part •of the natron a falcon-faced crocodile and, standing on him, •the nine-formed god; for the falcon-faced •crocodile himself greets the god •with snapping at the four turning-points of the year;

[45]for after coming up from the deep to breathe, he snaps his jaws, and •the one who has the nine forms replies to him.

a. The Greek noun for "coercion spell" in this context is unusual but is employed with similar meaning in *PGM* IV. 2574.

b. Unlike those of both Smith (*GMPT*, 173) and Preisendanz (*PGM* II.89), the translation above understands "spell" and "the names" not as distinct from "the formula" but rather as its main constituents, a reading that presupposes a cosmology wherein knowledge of the names of higher powers can be used against powers lower in the hierarchy.

c. Because natron is a "soapy substance" (*GMPT*, 173 n. 14), the potential of the Greek text to envision a process of "scratching into" makes better sense than the image of "writing upon" commended by both Smith (*GMPT*, 173) and Preisendanz (*PGM* II.89).

d. Collocationally, it makes more sense in English to say that crocodiles "snap" than to say they "pop"; thus Preisendanz's "Schnalzen" (*PGM* II.89) brings home the meaning better than Smith's "popping noise" (*GMPT*, 173).

•You will find both sets of gods — those presiding over hours and those over days — •along with the spell for coercing them, in the *Key of Moses*; •for Moses himself detached them.[a]

Natron Picture and Ritual Invocation (lines 383-441)

As for the great name, •write all of it on the Greek natron.

And instead [385]of the snapping noise, sketch onto the natron •the falcon-shaped crocodile;

for he greets •the God four times a year: at the •beginning of each of the natural[b] seasons of the gods, at the first turning of the world, •called "increase," then at what they call [390]"the birth of Horus," in his own exaltation, next at the rising of the Dog Star, and after that the elevation of Sothis.

At each •increase and decrease of Hēlios-Sun, •(the falcon-shaped crocodile) makes the snapping noise. The nine-formed •gives him capacity for making the noise at that •time, so that Hēlios-Sun might ascend from the sound of water;

[395]for (the falcon-shaped crocodile) co-appears with him.

Therefore (the falcon-shaped crocodile) acquired •the forms and the power of the nine •gods that rise with Hēlios-Sun.[c] Then, at the •downward turning[d] he sends out the weaker and less powerful •sound; for this is the birth of the world [400]and the sun. Next, at the "increase," when the bright sentinels of the sky •have begun to be exalted, •he sends out the sound more powerfully. And at the •rise of the Dog Star, at the turning to the west, •he sends out the noise even more powerfully, to the extent that he does not have nearby [405]the water naturally associated with the noise, and because this turning •increases his power still more. Finally, because the last turning in the cycle •includes the water's retreat and a lowering of Hēlios-Sun, •it takes away what (the falcon-shaped crocodile) gained in the preceding turn.

•So, with the myrrhed ink, draw both of the two together, [410]that is, the falcon-shaped crocodile •and the nine-formed god standing on him. •For at the four turnings the falcon-faced crocodile •greets the god with snapping. •For after coming up from the deep to breathe, he snaps his jaws, and [415]the one who has the nine forms replies to him.

---

a. Neither the idea that Moses "set out . . . one by one" the names and formulae nor that he "brought them all out of secrecy" (*GMPT*, 182 n. 79), does justice to the meaning of the main verb, which normally signifies a process of tearing, dragging, separating, or detaching. That range of meaning inspires the conjecture that the unexpressed circumstance in the same clause might be best understood as "from his other writings" (i.e., Moses detached these names and formulae from the Pentateuch and included them in the present text).

b. I.e., as opposed to the new moons of the calendars.

c. For purposes of coherence in English, the order of the clauses in lines 395-97 of the present translation diverges from the order of the Greek text more than at most other points.

d. As explained parenthetically in *GMPT*, 183, probably meaning the autumnal equinox.

Therefore, instead of the snapping noise, •sketch the falcon-faced crocodile, •for the snapping noise is the first syllable of the name. The second is a hissing; •but instead of the hissing noise, (sketch) a snake snacking[a] on its [50]tail, so that the two—snapping and hissing—are now •falcon-faced crocodile with nine-formed god standing •on him and, in a ring around them, the snake •and the seven vowels. And there are nine names, before which you must first say those of •the gods of the hours with the prayer on the stele, and those of the gods appointed over the [55]days of the week,[b] and the spell for coercing all of these. •For without these the god will not listen but •will reject you as uninitiated, unless you first shrewdly announce the names of the lord of •the day and of the hour, instruction •which you will find at the end of this book. For without these you will [60]not do even one of the things that you have in my *Key*.[c]

•Now the sacred stele to be written in the natron is:

> •I invoke you, the one greater than all, the one who •created all things, you who are self-begotten, the one who sees all and yet is •not seen; for you gave to Hēlios-Sun the glory and all the [65]power, and to Selēnē-Moon the faculty of increasing and decreasing and •running consistent laps. You took nothing from the earlier-born •darkness, but distributed equal portions of things; •for when you appeared, not only did light appear but also order came into being.
>
> •To you all things are subject, you whose true form none of the gods can [70]see. He who transforms himself •into all things, you are the invisible Age of the Age.[d]

---

a. Neither Preisendanz's German ("die Schlange . . . beisst," *PGM* II.89) nor Smith's English ("snake biting," *GMPT*, 173) does justice to the phonaesthetics of the Greek text, where the terms for "snake" and "bite" conspicuously rhyme. In addition to representing part of the word play, the repetition of the "s" in "snake snacking" reinforces the intended correspondence between the drawing and the sound of hissing.

b. Following Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiv, both here (XIII. 54-55) and in lines 425-26, and contra Preisendanz and Dieterich (see *PGM* II.90) who harmonise these passages with lines 735-36 by proposing the insertion of a conjunction and thus have both gods of the days *and* gods of the weeks.

c. I.e., the *Key of Moses*, implied here to be another of the first-person narrator's own treatises. Contra Smith (who, following Preisendanz, reads "the *Key*"), the possessive pronoun is present in the Greek text, as is evident in Daniel's photograph of the Greek (*Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiv, 34-35). The same word is absent, however, from the parallel in line 432.

d. Against the renderings in Preizendanz, *PGM*, and *GMPT*, both of which transliterate the Greek (e.g., "Aion of Aions") rather than actually translate it, a rendering into familiar English terms associated with lengthy periods of time comes close to bringing home the meaning.

•Therefore, instead of the snapping noise, •sketch the falcon-faced crocodile, for the snapping noise is the first syllable of the •name. The second is a hissing; but instead of the •hissing noise, (sketch) a snake snacking [420]on its tail, so that the two — snapping •and hissing — are now falcon-faced crocodile •with nine-formed god standing on him and, in a ring around •them, the snake and the seven vowels. And there are •nine names, before which you must first say those of the gods of the hours [425]with the prayer on the stele, and those of the gods •appointed over the days of the week,[a] and the spell for coercing all of these. •For without these the god will not listen •but will reject you as uninitiated, unless •you first shrewdly announce the names of the lord of the day and of the hour, [430]instruction which you will find at the end of this book. •For without these you will not do even one of the things that you have •in the *Key*.

Throw the mash of the seven flowers, •which you have prepared, into the ink, and thus write on the natron. •On both sides write what follows, and lick off [435]the one side, and wash off the other •into the wine and the milk; but first, before you wash it off, sacrifice •the rooster and get everything ready. •And, after sacrificing the rooster, push forward by turns the •other two and the pigeon,[b] which you have already prepared;[c] [440]then invoke the gods of the hours, as prescribed earlier, •and then drink up.[d]

The Text Written on the Natron (lines 568-600)

•Now the sacred stele written on the natron — •that is, the invocation — is given here with complete accuracy and runs as follows:

> [570]I invoke you, •the one who created all things, the one greater than all, •you, the self-begotten god, the one who sees all •and hears all, and yet is not seen; for you gave •to Hēlios-Sun the glory and all the power, [575]and to Selēnē-Moon the faculty of increasing and decreasing and •running consistent laps. You took nothing from the earlier-born •darkness, but instead distributed to them equal portions; •for when you appeared, not only did light appear but also order came into being, •and all things were arranged by you.
>
> Therefore all things [580]are also subject to you, whose •true form none of the gods can see, who changes form •in visions, Age of the Age.

a. See note on the parallel in lines 54-55.

b. As noted by Smith (*GMPT*, 184 n. 89), this instruction requires more roosters than are provided according to XIII. 369-75. Despite his helpful note, Smith's translation inexplicably omits this part of the text.

c. In *GMPT*, 184, the word "read" ("having made everything . . . read") is apparently a printing error and should be spelled "ready."

d. Line 442, which is the first of page 11 in the codex, has the same content as the final line (441) of the preceding page.

I invoke you, •Lord, that you might appear to me in a good form; for •under your world-government I serve your angel, **Biathiarbar •Berbirs Chilatour Bouphroumtrōm**, and [75]your terror, **Danouph Chrator Belbali Balbithiaō.** •Through you, the celestial pole and the earth are held together.

I invoke •you, Lord, as do the gods below you in order to have power—•**Echebukrōm** of Hēlios-Sun,[a] whose is the glory, **aaa ēēē** •ōōō iii aaa ōōō Sabaōth, Arbathiaō, [80]**Zagourē**, the god **Arathu Adōnaie.**

I invoke •you, Lord, in birdglyphic: **Arai**; in •hieroglyphic: **Lailam**; in Hebrew: **Anoch •Biathiarbath Berbir Echilatour Bouphroumtrom**; •in Egyptian: **Aldabaeim**; in baboonic: **Abrasax**; [85]in falconic: **chi chi chi chi chi chi chi tiph tiph tiph**; •in hieratic: •**Menephōiphōth cha cha cha cha cha cha cha.**

•Then clap three times, make a loud snapping noise, hiss for •a long time.

"Come to me, Lord, blameless and flawless, who defiles no [90]place; for I have been initiated with respect to your name."

Additional Materials Required for the Initiation (lines 91-114)

•Have a tablet on which you will write what •he says to you, and a double-edged knife of unadulterated iron, so that when •you slay the sacrifices they will be clean of all defilements, and a libation—•a jug of wine and a flask full of honey—[95]so that you may pour it out as a drink offering. Let all these things be at hand[b] ready for you. •And you be in clean linen garments, wreathed in an olive •wreath, having made[c] the canopy as follows:

•Taking a clean sheet of cloth, write around the •edge the names of the 365 gods. Make it a tent [100]under which you are to be initiated. Also have •a cinnamon hanging down from your neck; for •the deity is pleased by it and granted it power. And also have the helpful Apollo, carved •from a root of laurel, next •to which should stand tripod and [105]Pythian serpent. Carve around the Apollo •the great name in Egyptian form; on his •chest the palindrome "**Bainchooochooochniab**," down the back •of the figure this name: "**Ilillou Ililou** [110]**Ililou**"; and around the Pythian serpent and the •tripod: "**Ithor Marmarauge**

a. Represented in the papyrus not by a word but rather as a pictograph.

b. Smith's rendering "Have all these ready nearby you" is grammatically very loose and gives the misleading impression that the imperative is second person when in reality it is third.

c. By ignoring the implications of relative time in the aorist tense participle, and treating it as a command rather than as circumstantial, Smith's rendering in *GMPT* gives the impression that "the canopy" is actually made after the candidate has begun to perform the ritual and has put on the appropriate clothing. Against that interpretation, it makes far better sense to see the canopy as having been already prepared, as indeed is suggested both by the aorist tense form of the participle and by the relationship between writing and initiation implied in lines 111-13.

I invoke •you, Lord, that your true form might become apparent to me; •for under your world-government I serve [585]your angel, **Anag Biathiarbar Berbi •Schilatourbou Phrountōrm**, and your terror, **•Danoup Chrantor Belbali Balbith Iaō**. •Through you, the celestial pole and the earth are held together.

I invoke you, •Lord, as do the gods below you in order to have power — [590]**Achebukrōm**, whose is the glory, **aaa** ēēē •ōōō **iii aaa** ōōō **Sabaō**th, •Arbathiaō, Zagourē, the god **Arath Adōnai**.

•Basummiaō, I invoke you, Lord, in birdglyphic: **•Arai**; in hieroglyphic: **Lailam**; in Hebrew: **Anag** [595]**Biathiarbar Berbi Schilatourbour Phountōrm**; •in Egyptian: **Aldabaeim**; •in baboonic: **Abrasax**; in falconic: **chi chi chi chi chi •chi chi ti ti ti ti ti ti**; in hieratic: **Menephōiphōth** [600]**cha cha cha cha cha cha cha**.

Lines 600-607

Then clap three times, •make a loud snapping noise repeatedly, •hiss a great hiss, that is, for a long time.

•"Come to me, lord, who defiles no place and is blameless, •gracious, without anger; for I invoke [605]you, King of kings, Ruler of rulers, •most glorious of the glorious, Deity of deities, Strongest of the strong, Holiest of the holy. Come •to me eagerly, graciously, without anger."

Lines 646-52

•Have a tablet on which you will write •what he says to you, and a knife •so that you may slay the sacrifices clean of all (defilements), •and a libation so that you may pour it out as a drink offering. [650]Let all these things be at hand[a] ready for you. And you be •in clean linen garments, wreathed in an olive wreath, •having made[b] the canopy as follows:

Instructions concerning the Canopy and Other Ritual Objects (lines 653-70)

•Taking a clean sheet of cloth, write •around the edge the names of the 365 gods. Make it as you would a tent [655]under which you are to be initiated. Also have a cinnamon hanging •down from your neck; •for the deity is pleased by it and •granted it power. •And also have the helpful [660]Apollo, carved from a root of laurel, next to which should stand •tripod and Pythian snake. Carve •around the Apollo the great name in Egyptian •form; on his chest •this palindrome "**Bainchooochooochniab**," [665]down the back of the figure this name: •"**Ilillou Ilillou Ilillou**"; and around the •Pythian serpent and the tripod: •"**Ithor Marmarauge Phōchō Phōbōch**." •This too you should have hanging down from your neck when you perform the initiation, for [670]along with the cinnamon it helps in everything.

---

a. See note on the parallel in line 95.

b. See note on the parallel in line 97.

Phōchō •Phōbōch." This too you should have hanging down from your neck •when you perform the initiation, for along with the •cinnamon it is helpful in everything.

Ritual Speech, Sleep, and Drink (lines 114-61)

So, as [115]I said before,[a] when you have purified yourself just before the seven days of the moon's disappearing,[b] at •the new moon begin using a pallet of rushes on the ground for your bed. •Rising early, greet Hēlios-Sun daily •for seven days, saying first the •gods of the hours, then those appointed over the weeks. [120]After learning the ruling lord of the day, pester him •by repeatedly saying, "Lord, on such-and-such a day I am invoking the god for the sacred •sacrifices," and continue doing this until the eighth day.

•Then, when you have come to this day, •when there is quiet in the middle of the night at about the fifth hour,[c] kindle the altar fire and have at hand [125]the two roosters and the two lamps, •lit—together the lamps should be a fourth of a part—•to which you will add no more oil than that. Begin to recite the stele •and the mystery of the god, which is the sacred scarab.[d] Have a mixing bowl •lying close at hand and containing [130]milk from a black cow and wine without seawater, for this is beginning •and end. Then, having written the text of •the stele on the two sides of the natron, lick off the one side,[e] and wash off the other by bathing it •in the mixing bowl. Let •both sides of the natron[f] be written on (with ink) from the various kinds of incense and the flowers. [135]But before you drink the milk and the wine, utter •this prayer[g] and, having said it, lie down •on the mat, holding both the tablet and the stylus; •and say, "Hermetic (prayer)."

> In every language and every dialect, I invoke you who •surrounds all things, as he first [140]hymned you who was appointed by you and entrusted with all •the spiritual authorities, Hēlios-Sun **Achebukrōm**, who discloses •the flame and the splendour of the disk, and whose is the glory; **aaa •ēēē ōōō**, for on account of you he was glorified; he who •set up the stars, endowing them likewise[h] with beauty, and who in divine light [145]created the world, **iii aaa ōōō**, in which you separated all kinds of things from each other. •**Sabaōth Arbathiaō Zagourē**—these are •the angels who were the first

a. I.e., in the prescription located in lines 4-7; cf. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3539.

b. I.e., the last seven days of the forty-one-day programme of purification.

c. I.e., eleven o'clock.

d. Beetles of the family *Scarabaeidae* were regarded as divine in certain parts of ancient Egypt and were sometimes represented on amulets and in hieroglyphics as a symbol of the solar deity; s.v. "scarab," in *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (2nd ed.; London: Collins, 1986).

e. Tasting or consuming sacred text is implied in a range of ancient documents to have magico-religious efficacy—see, e.g., Ezek 2:8–3:15.

f. Because the double-sidedness of the natron is signified clearly in lines 131 and 434, "both" is understood here as qualifying not (as in *GMPT*, 175) the incenses and flowers but rather the two sides of the natron; cf. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3540.

g. The identity of this prayer is not as unclear as Smith (*GMPT*, 175) implies; for the elision of "prayer," following "Hermetic" in the immediately ensuing co-text, probably reflects an assumption that the reader will know to supply the unexpressed noun from the present line. "This prayer," then, is the Hermetic petition which directly follows in the co-text.

h. As noted in *GMPT*, 175 n. 29, the text is corrupt at this point and highly difficult to decipher.

Ritual Speech, Sleep, and Drink (lines 671-99)

•So, as I said before,[a] when you have purified yourself just before the seven days •of the moon's disappearing, at the new moon begin a phase of going to sleep at night on the ground. •Rising early, greet Hēlios-Sun daily •for seven days, saying first the [675]gods of the hours, then those •appointed over the weeks. After learning the ruling lord •of the day, pester him by repeatedly saying, "Lord, •on such-and-such a day I am invoking the god for the sacred sacrifices," and •continue doing this until the eighth day.

[680]Then, when you have come to this day, •when there is quiet in the middle of the night, kindle the altar fire •and have at your side the two roosters •and the two lit lamps, to which you will add no more •oil. Begin to recite the stele and the [685]mystery of the god. Have a mixing bowl lying close at hand •and containing milk from a black cow and wine •without seawater, for this is beginning and end. •Then, having written on one side of the natron the text •whose beginning is "I invoke you who are greater than all," [690]and so on as set forth above, lick that side clean;[b] and the other •side, on which is written the figure drawing, •you should wash by bathing it in the mixing bowl. Let the natron be written •on (with ink) from both the various kinds of incense and the flowers. •But before you drink the milk and the wine, [695]utter this prayer and, having said it, lie down •on the mat, holding the tablet •and the stylus; and say the formula of world-creation, whose beginning is, •"In every language and every dialect, I invoke •you who surround all things," and so on.

Lines 443-71

•In every language and every dialect, •I invoke you who surrounds all things. I hymn you, [445]as he first hymned you who was appointed by you and •entrusted with all the spiritual authorities, Hēlios-Sun **Achebukrōm,** •who discloses the flame and the splendour of the disk, •and whose is the glory; **aaa** ēēē ōōō, for •on account of you he was glorified, [450]he who set up the stars — or, •as in other texts, "endowed them with beauty" — and who in divine light created the world, •in which you separated all kinds of things from each other, **iii aaa ōōō. Sabaōth •Arbathiaō Zagourē** — •these are the

a. I.e., in the prescription located in lines 346-48. The reference chain between the present context and lines 346-48 is paralleled very closely by the chain that connects lines 4-7 to lines 114-16 within version A. The present lines, by contributing to both the reference chain and the parallel to version A, tacitly undermine Smith's case for interpreting lines 646-734 as a distinct version of *Moses VIII* (i.e., version C), separate both from version A (1-343) and from Smith's shortened version B (343-646). Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3539, briefly notes both the reference chain and the parallelism between the two versions but says nothing about their negative implications for Smith's hypothesis.

b. See note on the parallel in line 132.

to appear—**Arath, Adonaie, Basēmmiaō**.[a] The first •angel calls out in birdglyphic, "**Arai**," who has authority over •punishments. Hēlios-Sun hymns you in hieroglyphic, "**Lailam**," and [150]in Hebrew by the same name.[b] **Anok Biathiarbarberbischilatour •bouphroumtrōm**—thirty-six letters[c]—says •"I precede you, Lord, I who rise on the boat, the solar disk,[d] because of you." •Your powerful[e] name in Egyptian: **Aldabiaeim**[f]—nine letters, below. •He who appears on the boat rising with you is a crafty baboon. [155]In his own language he greets you and says, •"You are the number of the days of the year, **Abrasax**."[g] The falcon on the other •side of the boat greets you in his own dialect and cries out •to receive food: "**chi chi chi chi chi chi chi tip tip tip •tip tip tip tip**." And he of the nine forms greets you [160]in Hieratic: "**Menephōiphōth**." By saying this, he means: "I precede you, •Lord."

The Laughter of the God in the Creation of the World (lines 161-206)

Having said this, he clapped three times, and the God laughed •seven times: "**cha cha cha cha cha cha cha**." The God having laughed, •seven gods were begotten, who encompass the world—see above—•for these are the ones that appeared first.

When he cachinnated [165]the first time,[h] Phōs-Light Radiance appeared and irradiated everything; and •he became god over the world and the fire, **Bessun •Berithen Berio**.

---

a. Both the punctuation and the (rather cryptic) translation by Preisendanz (*PGM* II.94) implies the presence of only three names rather than four, the Hebraism **basēmm iaō** being construed as the single phrase "im Namen Jahwe" ("in the name of Yhwh"). However, as noted by Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3541, the immediate context of this construction leads the reader to expect not a prepositional phrase but rather a sequence of names, so that **Basēmm** is best understood as parallel to **Adonaie** and **Iaō**, and thus as the name of one of the first angels to be created. With a name so close to that of the "Gnostic" demiurge occurring nearby (**Aldabiaeim**, line 154), the application here of the names **Adonaie** and **Iaō** to created angels invites comparison to the biblical demiurgical myth elaborated in several tractates of the Nag Hammadi library; see, e.g., *Ap. John* II 23, 35.

b. Preisendanz's interpretation of the pronoun as adjectival (i.e., "gleichen," "same") is preferable to Smith's rendering of it as the demonstrative "own" (*GMPT*, 176); yet both of them err by imagining the thirty-six-letter name to be what the author understands as the Hebrew equivalent of "**Lailam**." Far better is the option of understanding "in Hebrew by the same name" as the end of one sentence, with the thirty-six-letter name being the beginning and grammatical subject of another.

c. Notwithstanding the suspicion of Smith (*GMPT*, 176 n. 37), the numerical gloss by the ancient copyist can be accepted as an accurate count of the Greek letters in the name when proper notice is taken of the deletion dot over the final occurrence of the letter rho in **Berbir** (thus **Berbi**), the shorter form corresponding precisely to the parallel in line 459. See Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiv.

d. Against Smith (*GMPT*, 176 n. 38), who sees the phrase for "solar disk" as "an uncertain expansion of an abbreviation otherwise unknown," the construction should be taken as an instance of an independent or hanging clause, which here as in certain other contexts serves to highlight the item to which it is most closely linked in the co-text (in this instance, "the boat").

e. The Greek adjective is *physikon*, which conveys overtones of great effectiveness and has none of the potentially negative overtones of Smith's suggestion, "magical."

f. It is perhaps no coincidence that the name corresponds to that applied to the demiurge Yaldabaoth in a number of the tractates from Nag Hammadi (note especially "**Aldabaoth**" in *Ap. John* II 23, 35), whose examples of hybridised Christian discourse from late antique Egypt are comparable at many points to the discursive world of *Moses VIII* and other texts in the Greek magical papyri.

g. As Smith notes, the numerical values of the Greek letters in "**Abrasax**" add up to 365.

h. Despite the infrequency of its usage in English, the unusual term "cachinnate" (meaning "to laugh loudly," and probably onomatopoeic in character) is employed here both in order to signal that the Greek

angels who were the first to appear—**Araga Arath Adonaie, Basēmmiaō**. [455]The first angel calls out to you in birdglyphic, •"**Arai**," which is "woe to my enemy," and you appointed •him over punishments. Hēlios-Sun hymns you •in hieroglyphic, "**Lailam**," and in Hebrew by the same name. **Anag •Biathiarbar Berbi Schila Tourbouphroumtrōm** [460]says, "I precede you, Lord, I who rise on the boat, the solar disk, because of you." Your powerful name •in Egyptian: "**Aldabaeim**" — this means the boat •on which he ascends when he rises over the world. He who appears •on the boat rising with you is a crafty baboon. •In his own language he greets you and says, [465]"You are the number of the days of the year, **Abrasax**."[a] The •falcon on the other side of the boat greets •you in his own dialect and cries out •to receive food: "**chi chi chi chi chi chi •ti ti ti ti ti ti ti**." And he of the nine forms greets [470]you in Hieratic: "**Menephōiphōth,**" meaning •"I precede you, Lord."

The Laughter of the God in the Creation of the World (lines 471-564)

Having said this, he clapped three times, and •the God laughed seven times: "**cha cha cha cha cha cha cha**." •When he laughed, seven gods were begotten, •who encompass all things, for these are [475]the ones that appeared first.

When he cachinnated the first time,[b] •Phōs-Light Radiance appeared and divided everything into separate groups; •and he became god over the world and the fire, •**Besen Bereithen Berio**.

a. See note on parallel in line 156.

b. See note on the parallel in lines 164.

He cachinnated a second time. All was water. •Gē-Earth, hearing the sound, cried out and arose into a heap, and the water became •tripartite. A god appeared; he was given charge of the abyss, [170]for without him moisture neither increases nor decreases. •And his name is **Eschakleō**, for you are Ōēaieiōn •Bethelle.

When he was pleased to laugh the third time, Nous-Mind or Thought, •understanding as he does the heart, •appeared because of the god's harshness. He was called Hermes; he was called **Semesilam**.

[175]The god cachinnated the fourth time, and Genna-Fertility appeared, •having control over sowing. She was called **Badētophōth •Zōthaxathōz**.

He laughed the fifth time and, after laughing, became gloomy; •and Moira-Destiny appeared and was holding scales, indicating that •in herself[a] justice is to be found. But Hermes [180]contended with her, saying, "In me[b] is justice to be found."

While they were fighting, •God said, "By both of you will justice be made apparent,[c] •but all things in the world will be subject to you (Moira-Destiny)." She was the first •to receive the scepter of the world—she whose name in palindromic form •is great and holy and glorious. It is this: **Thoriobrititamma Ōrraggadōiōdaggarrōammatitir [185]Boiroth**—forty-nine letters.

He cachinnated the sixth time and was made very happy. •And Kairos-Time appeared and was holding a scepter, indicating kingship, •and he gave over the scepter to the first-created god.[d] •Receiving it, the first-created god said, "You, because you enveloped yourself in the glory of Phōs-Light, will be [190]with me."

---

verb in this context differs from that rendered "laugh" in lines 162-63 and in order to do justice to the paronomasia in the relationship between "**cha cha cha** ... " and the verb *kachazō* (cachinnate).

a. Preisendanz ("in ihr sei die Gerechtigkeit"; see *PGM* II.96) captures the emphasis of Moira's interchange with Hermes better than does Smith ("justice was in her province"; see *GMPT*, 177), who ignores the emphatic position of the prepositional phrase.

b. Appropriately, in Greek the word order of Hermes' response highlights his own counter-claim to honour.

c. Because the word order in Greek puts special emphasis at this point on the new information (i.e., that justice will be the responsibility of neither deity on its own but rather of "both" Moira and Hermes), Smith's rendering in *GMPT* ("What *seems to be just* will depend on both"; emphasis mine) is a muddle—the idea that the highest god has doubts about what is just has no support in this context.

d. I.e., Phōs-Light; see lines 164-65.

He cachinnated •a second time. All was water; but Gē-Earth, hearing [480]the sound and seeing Radiance, was alarmed and arose into a heap, •and the water became tripartite. •A god appeared and was given charge of the abyss, and thus •without him moisture neither increases nor decreases. •And his name is **Promsacha Aleeiō**, for you [485]are Ōēai Bethe.

When he was pleased •to laugh the third time, •Nous-Mind, also known as Thought, understanding as he does the heart, appeared because of the god's harshness; and •he was called Hermes, for through him have come all things hermeneutical.[a] •He is also in charge of the faculties of thought, through which [490]everything is managed. And he is also known as **Semesilamps**.

•The god cachinnated the fourth time, and Genna-Fertility appeared, •having control over the sowing of all things, and through whom all things were sown.[b] •She was called **Badētophōth Zōthaxathōzō**.

[495]He laughed the fifth time and, after laughing, became gloomy; and Moira-Destiny appeared[c] •and was holding scales, indicating that in herself justice is •to be found. But Hermes contended with her, saying, "In •me is justice to be found."

While they were fighting, •God said to them, "By both of you [500]will justice be made apparent, but all things in the world will be subject to you (Moira-Destiny)." •She was the first to receive the scepter of the world, •and she was called by a holy, palindromic name, •fearful and frightful. It is this: **Thoriobriti** and so on. •Her name in palindromic form is great and [505]holy and glorious. And this is of great merit, a mighty name: **Thoriobriti•ta mmaōrraggadōiōdaggarrōammati•tirboiroth** — forty-nine letters.

He cachinnated •the sixth time[d] and was made very happy. And Kairos-Time appeared and was holding a scepter, •indicating kingship, and he gave over the scepter to [510]the first-created god.[e] Receiving it, the first-created god said, "You, because you enveloped yourself in the •glory of Phōs-Light, will be with me, because you were the first •to give me a scepter. All things will be under your control, things •past and things yet to be. In you •will be all power." When Kairos-Time enveloped himself in the glory of Phōs-Light, [515]the manner of the light underwent a certain change of course.[f] •The god[g] then said to

---

a. Despite its association in English with modern epistemology and theories of understanding, the word "hermeneutical" is commended here as preferable to previous suggestions (e.g., *GMPT*, 185: "... have been interpreted"; and Preizendanz, *PGM* II.111: "verdolmetscht") because of its ability to articulate the word-play effected in Greek by *Hermēs* and *methermēneustai*.

b. Both *GMPT* and Preisendanz's German obscure the morphological correspondence between the Greek terms for "sowing" and "were sown," a correspondence that contributes to redundancy and inelegance in the Greek text.

c. Like several other lines earlier in the text, this one is written twice by accident, occurring both as the last line (494) on one page and the first (495) on the next.

d. Contra *GMPT*, 185 n. 95, the Greek noun for "time" in the ensuing sentence is not used in this clause.

e. As in the parallel at line 187 so also here, Phōs-Light; see lines 475-76.

f. Smith's literal rendering ("the character of the light produced a certain effluence"; see *GMPT*, 185) is nearly unintelligible and exemplifies, at least at this point, a translation practice that treats meaning as resident in individual words rather than in clauses and sentences.

g. Probably the most high god whose seven cachinnations are narrated in the present section.

Anoch Biathiar Barberbir Silatourbou Phroumtrōm •—thirty-six letters.

When the god cachinnated a seventh time, •Psychē-Soul came into being, and after cachinnating the god wept. On seeing Psychē-Soul, •(the god) hissed, and the earth heaved and gave birth to Pythian serpent, •who foreknew all things. The god called him **Ilillou** [195]**Ilillou Ilillou Ilillou Ithōrmarmaraugēphōchō •Phōbōch**.

On seeing the serpent, the god was terrified and began to make a clicking noise. •While the god clicked, an armed man appeared who is called •**Danoupchrator Berbalibarbith**. On seeing him, •the god was terrified again, like one who has seen someone stronger, [200]for fear that the earth had cast up a god.

Looking down at the earth, •he said, "**Iaō**." From the echo a god was begotten who is •lord of all.

The preceding man contended with him, saying, •"I am stronger than this god." The (first) god said to the strong man, •"You happen to come from the clicking noise, and this god from an echo. Both of you will be put in charge [205]of every need." The pair was then called **Danoup •Chratorberbalibalbith Iaō**.

the queen,[a] "Having enveloped yourself in the flux •of Phōs-Light, you will be with him, encompassing all things. •You will increase by the light you receive from him and again •you will fall back because of him. With you all things will increase and [520]decrease." The name is great and marvelous — •**Anag Biathiarbar Berbischila Tour Bouphrountōrm** — thirty-six letters.

•He cachinnated the seventh time, panting, and both •Psychē-Soul and all kinds of things came into being.[b] So the god said, •"You will move all things; and with [525]Hermes guiding you, all will be heartened." When the god said this, all things •were put in motion and inspirited like mad.

The •god, seeing this, made the snapping noise, and all things were terrified; and •because of the snapping noise, Phobos-Fear appeared, armed to the teeth. •He is called **Danoup Chratōr [530]Berbali Balbithi** — twenty-six letters.

Then, turning •toward the earth, the god made a loud hissing noise; and the earth was opened up when it received •the echo.

It gave birth to its own creature, the •Pythian serpent, which foreknew all things •through the utterance of the god. Its name is great and [535]holy, **Ililloui Ililloui Ililloui Ithōr•marmaraugē Phōchō Phōbōch**.

When the serpent •appeared, the earth arose into a heap and was lifted up exceedingly high. •But the celestial pole remained stable, so that the earth was about to collide with it. •But the god said, "**Iaō**," with the result that everything came to a stop. [540]Then a very great and mighty god appeared, who established the things that are now already past •in the cosmos and also the things yet to be. Thereafter, •none of the aerial bodies ever moved from its prescribed place.

Phobos-Fear, however, on seeing •someone mightier than himself, opposed him and uttered the boast, •"I am superior to you."

To which the other (**Iaō**) replied, "But I established all things in their places."

So the (highest) [545]god intervened: "You, O serpent, are from an echo, but the god **Iaō** is from •the very utterance itself. The utterance, truly, is better than the echo. •None the less, **Iaō**, the power of you who appeared last will derive not from yourself alone but rather from the both of you, •so that all things might indeed be established in their places." And •from that time he was called by the great and marvelous name **Danoup Chratōr [550]Berbali Balbith Iaō**.

And wanting •to give a grant of honour to his helper •since he had appeared together

---

a. Perhaps, as suggested in *GMPT*, 185 n. 98, Selēnē-Moon; but stronger support is given by the immediate co-text for one of the feminine deities explicitly mentioned in lines 479-505, namely Gē-Earth, Genna-Fertility, and Moira-Destiny.

b. Smith's rendering "came into being and all things were moved" corresponds very literally to what is in the manuscript; but it also creates temporal dissonance with the god's ensuing pronouncement, "You will move all things," and it ignores evidence of scribal error in lines 523-24 where the verb for "were put in motion" has been prematurely copied twice from line 526. See Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxv-xxvi.

The Initiate Imitates the God (lines 206-209)

"Lord, I imitate (you by pronouncing) •the seven vowels. Enter and hear me, **a ee ēēē •iiii ooooo uuuuuu ōōōōōōō, Abrōch Braōch •Chrammaōth Proarbathō Iaō Ouaeēiouō.**"

The Revelatory Event (lines 210-12)

[210]When the god enters, look down and write what is said •and whatever name they might give you for him; and do not go out •of your tent until he has also told you accurately the things concerning you.

Lines 61-90

•Now the sacred stele to be written in the natron is:

•I invoke you, the one greater than all, the one who •created all things, you who are self-begotten, the one who sees all and yet is •not seen; for you gave to Hēlios-Sun the glory and all the [65]power, and to Selēnē-Moon the faculty of increasing and decreasing and •running consistent laps. You took nothing from the earlier-born •darkness, but distributed equal portions of things; •for when you appeared, not only did light appear but also order came into being. •To you all things are subject, you whose true form none of the gods can [70]see. He who transforms himself •into all things, you are the invisible Age of the Age.[a]

I invoke you, •Lord, that you might appear to me in a good form; for •under your world-government I serve your angel, **Biathiarbar •Berbirs Chilatour Bouphroumtrōm**, and [75]your terror, **Danouph Chrator Belbali Balbithiaō.** •Through you, the celestial pole and the earth are held together.

I invoke •you, Lord, as do the gods below you in order to have power— •**Echebukrōm** of Hēlios-Sun,[b] whose is the glory, **aaa ēēē** •ōōō iii aaa ōōō Sabaōth, Arbathiaō, [80]**Zagourē**, the god **Arathu Adōnaie**.

I invoke •you, Lord, in birdglyphic: **Arai**; in •hieroglyphic: **Lailam**; in Hebrew: **Anoch •Biathiarbath Berbir Echilatour Bouphroumtrom**; •in Egyptian: **Aldabaeim**; in baboonic: **Abrasax**; [85]in falconic: **chi chi chi chi chi chi chi tiph tiph tiph**; •in hieratic: **•Menephōiphōth cha cha cha cha cha cha cha.**

---

a. Against the renderings in Preizendanz, *PGM*, and *GMPT*, both of which transliterate the Greek (e.g., "Aion of Aions") rather than actually translate it, a rendering into familiar English terms associated with lengthy periods of time comes close to bringing home the meaning.

b. Represented in the papyrus not by a word but rather as a pictograph.

with him, the highest god gave him both leadership of the nine •gods and possession of •power and glory equal to theirs. [555]And he was called by a name derived from the nine gods by taking away, along with the power, •also select letters from their names, •**Bosbeadii**, and from the seven planets, **aeēiouō •eēiouō ēiouō iouō ouō uō ō ōyoiēea •yoiēea oiēea iēea ēea ea a** — [560]great and marvelous when written out as a palindrome! But •his greatest name, which follows, is really great and holy: •**Abōrch Braōch Chrammaōth Prōarbathō •Iaō**. Alternatively: **Abrōch Braōch Chrammaōth Prōarbathō •Iaō Ou Aeēiouō** — twenty-seven letters.

Lines 700-702

"Lord, I imitate you •with regard to the seven vowels; enter and hear me."•Then cite the name of the twenty-seven letters.

The Revelatory Event (564-67; cf. 704-717)

So, when [565]the god enters, look down and write what is said and whatever •name they might give you for him; and do not go out of •your tent until he has also told you the things concerning you.

The Text Written on the Natron (lines 568-600)

•Now the sacred stele to be written on the natron — •that is, the invocation — is given here with complete accuracy and runs as follows:

> [570]I invoke you, •the one who created all things, the one greater than all, •you, the self-begotten god, the one who sees all •and hears all, and yet is not seen; for you gave •to Hēlios-Sun the glory and all the power, [575]and to Selēnē-moon the faculty of increasing and decreasing and •running consistent laps. You took nothing from the earlier-born •darkness, but instead distributed to them equal portions; •for when you appeared, not only did light appear but also order came into being, •and all things were arranged by you. Therefore all things [580]are also subject to you, whose •true form none of the gods can see, who changes form •in visions, Age of the Age.[a]
>
> I invoke •you, Lord, that your true form might become apparent to me; •for under your world-government I serve [585]your angel, **Anag Biathiarbar Berbi •Schilatourbou Phrountōrm**, and your terror, •**Danoup Chrantor Belbali Balbith Iaō**. •Through you, the celestial pole and the earth are held together.
>
> I invoke you, •Lord, as do the gods below you in order to have power — [590]**Achebukrōm**, whose is the glory, **aaa ēēē •ōōō iii aaa** ōōō **Sabaōth**, •Arbathiaō, Zagourē, the god **Arath Adōnai**.
>
> •**Basummiaō**, I invoke you, Lord, in birdglyphic: •**Arai**; in hieroglyphic: **Lailam**; in Hebrew: **Anag** [595]**Biathiarbar Berbi Schilatourbour Phountōrm**; •in Egyptian: **Aldabaeim**; •in baboonic: **Abrasax**; •in falconic: **chi chi chi chi chi •chi chi ti ti ti ti ti ti ti**; in hieratic: **Menephōiphōth** [600]**cha cha cha cha cha cha cha**.

a. See note on the parallel in line 71.

•Then clap three times, make a loud snapping noise, hiss for •a long time. "Come to me, Lord, blameless and flawless, who defiles no [90]place; for I have been initiated with respect to your name."

Additional Materials Required for the Initiation (lines 91-114)

•Have a tablet on which you will write what •he says to you, and a double-edged knife of unadulterated iron, so that when •you slay the sacrifices they will be clean of all defilements, and a libation—•a jug of wine and a flask full of honey—[95]so that you may pour it out as a drink offering. Let all these things be at hand[a] ready for you. •And you be in clean linen garments, wreathed in an olive •wreath, having made[b] the canopy as follows:

a. Smith's rendering "Have all these ready nearby you" is grammatically very loose and gives the misleading impression that the imperative is second person when in reality it is third.

b. By ignoring the implications of relative time in the aorist tense participle, and treating it as a command rather than as circumstantial, Smith's rendering in *GMPT* gives the impression that "the canopy" is actually made after the candidate has begun to perform the ritual and has put on the appropriate clothing. Against that interpretation, it makes far better sense to see the canopy as having been already prepared, as indeed is suggested both by the aorist tense form of the participle and by the temporal relationship between writing and initiation implied in lines 112-14.

Additional Performative Gestures and Invocation (lines 600-609)

Then clap three times, •make a loud snapping noise repeatedly, •hiss a great hiss, that is, for a long time. •"Come to me, lord, who defiles no place and is blameless, •gracious, without anger; for I invoke [605]you, King of kings, Ruler of rulers, •most glorious of the glorious, Deity of deities, •Strongest of the strong, Holiest of the holy. Come •to me eagerly, graciously, without anger."

Prescription for Initiatory Encounter (lines 610-52)

•An angel will enter, and you should say to the angel, "Greetings, Lord. [610]Initiate me into these matters, •present me (to the god), and let the secret meanings •of my time of birth be revealed to me." And if he says anything •inauspicious, say, "Wipe off from me the •misfortunes decreed by fate; do not hold back from me, but reveal [615]to me everything, by night and day and in every hour of the month, •to me NN son of NN. Let your auspicious •form become apparent, for under your world-government I serve your angel, •**Anag Biathi.**" The formula:

> Lord, I invoke you, holy, •much hymned, greatly honoured, ruler of the world, [620]Sarapis: look upon the time of my birth and do not turn me away, •me, NN whom NN bore, who knows your •true and authoritative name, Ōaōēō Ōeoē •Iaō Iiiaaō Thēthouthē Aathō Athērouōramiathar •Migarna Chphouri Iueuēoōaeē a ee ēēē [625]**iiii ooooo uuuuuu ōōōōōōō Semesilammps •Aeēiouō Ēōoue Linoucha Noucha Arsamosi •Isnorsam Othamarmim Achuch Chammō.**
>
> •I invoke you, lord; I hymn your •holy might with a melodic hymn, **aeēiouōōō.**

[630]Then burn incense while saying, •"ēiouō uiyō ouō uō ō a ee ēēē iiii •ooooo uuuuuu ōōōōōōō ōēōaōaō •ooouo iiiiiaō iiuuuoaēauo. Safeguard me •against all my own star-fixed destiny; annul my [635]stinking fate; apportion to me good things from my time of birth; •increase both my longevity and my material prosperity. •For I am your slave and petitioner, and I have hymned your •authoritative and holy name, lord, glorious one, ruler of the world, •measureless one,[a] greatest, provider, apportioner, [640]Sarapis."

Having taken a deep breath with the aid of all your •senses, pronounce the first name in one breath •to the east, the second to the south, the third to the north, the fourth to the •west. And having knelt once to the left on your right knee, pronounce once to the earth and once •to the moon,[b] once to water, once to heaven, "ōaōē ōō eoēiaō [645]**iii aōō thē thou thē aathō athērouō**" — thirty-six letters.

•Have a tablet on which you will write •what he says to you, also a knife •so that you may slay the sacrifices clean of all (defilements), •and a libation so that you may pour it out as a drink offering. [650]Let all these things be at hand[c] ready for you. And you be •in clean linen garments, wreathed in an olive wreath, •having made[d] the canopy as follows:

---

a. Neither the sequence of letters in the manuscript nor Preisendanz's emendation (see *PGM* II.116) corresponds to a word attested elsewhere in Greek, and Smith's conjecture ("of ten thousand names"; see *GMPT*, 188) lacks support. The translation offered here is based on the undisputed presence of the Greek stem known in various words signifying boundlessness, infinity, etc.

b. Represented not verbally but pictographically at this point in the papyrus.

c. See note on parallel in line 95.

d. See note on the parallel in line 97.

•Taking a clean sheet of cloth, write around the •edge the names of the 365 gods. Make it a tent [100]under which you are to be initiated. Also have •a cinnamon hanging down from your neck; for •the deity is pleased by it and has granted it power. And also have the helpful Apollo, carved •from a root of laurel, next •to which should stand tripod and [105]Pythian serpent. Carve around the Apollo •the great name in Egyptian form; on his •chest the palindrome •"**Bainchooochooochniab**," down the back •of the figure this name: "**Ilillou Ilillou** [110]**Ilillou**"; and around the Pythian serpent and the •tripod: "**Ithor Marmarauge Phōchō •Phōbōch**." This too you should have hanging down from your neck •when you perform the initiation, for along with the •cinnamon it is helpful in everything.

Ritual Speech, Sleep, and Drink (lines 114-61)

So, as [115]I said before,[a] when you have purified yourself just before the seven days of the moon's disappearing,[b] at •the new moon begin using a pallet of rushes on the ground for your bed. •Rising early, greet Hēlios-Sun daily •for seven days, saying first the •gods of the hours, then those appointed over the weeks. [120]After learning the ruling lord of the day, pester him •by repeatedly saying, "Lord, on such-and-such a day I am invoking the god for the sacred •sacrifices," and continue doing this until the eighth day.

•Then, when you have come to this day, •when there is quiet in the middle of the night at about the fifth hour,[c] kindle the altar fire and have at hand [125]the two roosters and the two lamps, •lit—together the lamps should be a fourth of a part—•to which you will add no more oil than that. Begin to recite the stele •and the mystery of the god, which is the sacred scarab.[d] Have a mixing bowl •lying close at hand and containing [130]milk from a black cow and wine without seawater, for this is beginning •and end. Then, having written the text of •the stele on the two sides of the natron, lick off the one side, and wash off the other by bathing it •in the mixing bowl. Let •both sides of the natron[e] be written on (with ink) from the various kinds of incense and the flowers. [135]But before you drink the milk and the wine, utter •this prayer[f] and, having said it, lie down •on the mat, holding both the tablet and the stylus; •and say, "Hermetic (prayer)."

> In every language and every dialect, I invoke you who •surrounds all things, as he first [140]hymned you who was appointed by you and entrusted with all •the spiritual authorities, Hēlios-Sun **Achebukrōm**, who discloses •the flame and the splendour

a. I.e., in the prescription located in lines 4-7; cf. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3539.

b. I.e., the last seven days of the 41-day programme of purification.

c. I.e., eleven o'clock.

d. Beetles of the family *Scarabaeidae* were regarded as divine in certain parts of ancient Egypt and were sometimes represented on amulets and in hieroglyphics as a symbol of the solar deity; s.v. "scarab," in *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (2nd ed.; London: Collins, 1986).

e. Because the double-sidedness of the natron is signified clearly in lines 132 and 434, "both" is understood here as qualifying not (as in *GMPT*, 175) the incenses and flowers but rather the two sides of the natron; cf. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3540.

f. The identity of this prayer is not as unclear as Smith (*GMPT*, 175) implies; for the elision of "prayer," following "Hermetic" in the immediately ensuing co-text, probably reflects an assumption that the reader will know to supply the unexpressed noun from the present line. "This prayer," then, is the Hermetic petition which directly follows in the co-text.

Instructions concerning the Canopy and Other Ritual Objects (653-70)

•Taking a clean sheet of cloth, write •around the edge the names of the 365 gods. Make it as you would a tent [655]under which you are to be initiated. Also have a cinnamon hanging •down from your neck; •for the deity is pleased by it and •has granted it power. •And also have the helpful [660]Apollo, carved from a root of laurel, next to which should stand •tripod and Pythian serpent. Carve •around the Apollo the great name in Egyptian •form; on his chest •this palindrome: "**Bainchooochooochniab**"; [665]down the back of the figure this name: •"**Ililou Ililou Ililou**"; and around the •Pythian serpent and the tripod: •"**Ithor Marmarauge Phōchō Phōbōch**." •This too you should have hanging down from your neck when you perform the initiation, for [670]along with the cinnamon it helps in every way.

Ritual Speech, Sleep, and Drink (lines 671-704)

•So, as I said before,[a] when you have purified yourself just before the seven days •of the moon's disappearing,[b] at the new moon begin a phase of going to sleep at night on the ground. •Rising early, greet the Hēlios-Sun daily •for seven days, saying first the [675]gods of the hours, then those •appointed over the weeks. After learning the ruling lord •of the day, pester him by repeatedly saying, "Lord, •on such-and-such a day I am invoking the god for the sacred sacrifices," and •continue doing this until the eighth day.

[680]Then, when you have come to this day, •when there is quiet in the middle of the night, kindle the altar fire •and have at your side the two roosters •and the two lit lamps, to which you will add no more •oil. Begin to recite the stele and the [685]mystery of the god. Have a mixing bowl lying close at hand •and containing milk from a black cow and wine •without seawater, for this is beginning and end. •Then, having written on one side of the natron the text •whose beginning is "I invoke you who are greater than all," [690]and so on as set forth above, lick that side clean;[c] and the other •side, on which is written the figure drawing, •you should wash by bathing it in the mixing bowl. Let the natron be written •on (with ink) from both the various kinds of incense and the flowers. •But before you drink the milk and the wine, [695]utter this prayer and, having said it, lie down •on the mat, holding the tablet •and the stylus; and say the formula of world-creation, whose beginning is,

> •"In every language and every dialect, I invoke •you who surrounds all things," and so on. And when [700]you come to the vowels, say, "Lord, I imitate you •with regard to the seven vowels; enter and hear me." •Then cite the name of the twenty-seven letters. Be reclined •on a pallet of rushes, spread under you •as sleeping mats.

---

a. I.e., in the prescription located in lines 346-49. The reference chain between the present context and lines 346-49 is paralleled very closely by the chain that connects lines 4-8 to lines 114-16 within version A. The present lines, by contributing to both the reference chain and the parallel to version A, tacitly undermine Smith's case for interpreting lines 646-734 as a distinct version of *Moses VIII* (i.e., version C), separate both from version A (1-343) and from Smith's shortened version B (343-646). Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3539, briefly notes both the reference chain and the parallelism between the two versions but says nothing about their negative implications for Smith's hypothesis.

b. See note on the parallel in line 115.

c. Tasting or consuming sacred text is implied in a range of ancient documents to have magico-religious efficacy; see, e.g., Ezek 2:8–3:15.

of the disk, and whose is the glory; **aaa** •ēēē ōōō, for on account of you he was glorified; he who •set up the stars, endowing them likewise[a] with beauty, and who in divine light [145]created the world, **iii aaa ōōō**, in which you separated all kinds of things from each other. •**Sabaōth Arbathiaō Zagourē**—these are •the angels who were the first to appear—**Arath, Adonaie, Basēmmiaō**.

The first •angel calls out in birdglyphic, "**Arai**," who has authority over •punishments. Hēlios-Sun hymns you in hieroglyphic, "**Lailam**," and [150]in Hebrew by the same name. **Anok Biathiarbarberbischilatour•bouphroumtrōm**—thirty-six letters[b]—says •"I precede you, Lord, I who rise on the boat, the solar disk, because of you." •Your powerful[c] name in Egyptian: **Aldabiaeim**[d]—nine letters, below.

•He who appears on the boat rising with you is a crafty baboon. [155]In his own language he greets you and says, •"You are the number of the days of the year, **Abrasax**."[e] The falcon on the other •side of the boat greets you in his own dialect and cries out •to receive food: "**chi chi chi chi chi chi tip tip tip •tip tip tip tip**." And he of the nine forms greets you [160]in Hieratic: "**Menephōiphōth**." By saying this, he means: "I precede you, •Lord."

The Revelatory Event (lines 210-12; cf. lines 564-67)

[210]When the god enters, look down and write what is said •and whatever name they might give you for him; and do not go out •of your tent until he has also told you accurately the things concerning you.

Ascertaining the Ruler of the Celestial Pole (lines 213-26)

•The way to determine who is ruling the celestial pole at a given moment involves the following: •Learn, child, whose day it is in the Greek reckoning.[f] Coming to the [215]seven-zoned, count from the bottom up[g] and you will discover who it is. For if the day belongs

---

a. As noted in *GMPT*, 175 n. 29, the text is corrupt at this point and highly difficult to decipher.

b. Notwithstanding the suspicion of Smith (*GMPT*, 176 n. 37), the numerical gloss by the ancient copyist can be accepted as an accurate count of the Greek letters in the name when proper notice is taken of the deletion dot over the final occurrence of the letter rho in **Berbir** (thus **Berbi**), the shorter form corresponding precisely to the parallel in line 459. See Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiv.

c. The Greek adjective is *physikon*, which conveys overtones of great effectiveness and has none of the potentially negative overtones of Smith's suggestion, "magical."

d. It is perhaps no coincidence that the name corresponds to that applied to the demiurge Yaldabaoth in a number of the tractates from Nag Hammadi (note especially "**Aldabaoth**" in *Ap. John* II 23, 35), whose examples of hybridised Christian discourse from late antique Egypt are comparable at many points to the discursive world of *Moses VIII* and other texts in the Greek magical papyri.

e. As Smith notes, the numerical values of the Greek letters in "**Abrasax**" add up to 365.

f. Apparently, as suggested parenthetically in *GMPT*, 178, counting from the top down.

g. As suggested by the order of the table, counting from the bottom up the same number that was counted from the top down.

Instructions concerning the Meeting with the God (lines 704-717)

Now when the god enters, do not stare [705]at his face, but look at his feet while beseeching, •as set forth above, and giving thanks that he did not treat you with disdain; •that you were counted worthy of the things to be said to you for the correction of •your life. Next you make your inquiry: •"Master, what is fated for me?" And he will answer you [710]in terms of your star and what sort of daimon you have and your •ascendant decan[a] and where you will live and where you will die. •Should you hear something bad, do not yawp, do not yawl,[b] •but instead request that he cancel[c] or avert it; •for this god is able to do anything. Thus, before you begin to inquire, [715]give him thanks for hearing you •and not disregarding you. This will always be the way in which you should perform the rite •and offer pious regards to the god; for this is how he is persuaded to hear you.

Ascertaining the Ruler of the Celestial Pole (lines 718-30)

•The way to determine who is ruling the celestial pole at a given moment involves the following: •Learn, child, whose day it is in the Greek reckoning.[d] [720]Coming to the seven-zoned, count from the bottom up[e] •and you will discover who it is. For if the day belongs

---

a. By merely transliterating the Greek term, Smith's use of "horoscope" evades the real interpretive problem of translation and gives a sense which is both too general and more domesticating than necessary. The "ascendant decan" would be the particular ten-degree segment of the zodiacal circle that happened to be emerging in the East at the moment of the child's birth; see Barton, *Ancient Astrology*, 18, 20; and Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3543.

b. The Greek verb phrases (*mē kraxēs* and *mē krausēs*) evince a wordplay that neither the English of *GMPT* ("do not cry out or weep") nor the German in Preizendanz, *PGM* II.119 ("brich nicht in Schreien, nicht in Weinen aus") tries to approximate.

c. Smith's rendering "wash it off" (*GMPT*, 189) ignores better alternatives within the semantic range of the Greek verb and also effects a misleading correspondence to different terminology used in the antecedent co-text (XIII. 689-91) where it is precisely various types of washing that is envisaged.

d. See note on the parallel in line 214.

e. See note on the parallel in line 215.

•to Hēlios-Sun[a] in the Greek reckoning, Selēnē-Moon rules the pole, and so also the rest as mentioned here:

•**The Greek**	**The Seven-Zoned**
• Hēlios-Sun	Kronos-Time
• Selēnē-Moon	Zeus
[220]Ares	Ares
•Hermes	Hēlios-Sun
•Zeus	Aphrodite
•Aphrodite	Hermes
•Kronos-Time	Selēnē-Moon

[225]The inexhaustible and godly solution of these things I have declared •to you, child, a solution which not even kings had power to comprehend.

Recording the Revelation on the Natron (lines 227-29)

•Now you should write[b] on the natron with the ink from the flowers of the •seven stars and types of aromatic spices. In a similar way you should also make the vetch mixture,[c] which I spoke about allegorically •in my *Key*, from the flowers and the types of incense.

Various Ritual Uses of the Revealed Name (lines 230-340)

[230]The initiation known as *The Monad* has been declared to you fully, child. •Now I shall append for you, child, the uses of this sacred book, the things that all •the masters accomplished by means of this sacred and blessed •book. As I made you swear, child, by the temple[d] of Jerusalem, •when you have been filled with the divine knowledge put the book in a place where it cannot be found.

First, then, is the [235]marvellous invisibility. Taking the egg of a falcon, gild half of it •and smear the other half with cinnabar. Wearing this, •you will be invisible when you say the name.

•For a love charm, say the name three times to the sun. It charms woman for man •and man for woman in a way that will make you marvel.[e]

If you want someone to be repulsive—[240]either a woman to a man or a man to a woman—take •a dog's feces and put it in the socket of their door while saying •the name three times, and then saying, "I separate NN from NN."

---

a. Represented in the papyrus not by word but rather as a pictograph.

b. As hinted in lines 38-39, what is to be written on the natron depends on what name is revealed during the initiatory encounter.

c. Neither Smith's use of "bean" (*GMPT*, 178) nor Preisendanz's "Erbse" (pea) is warranted by the Greek vocabulary used in this context, though the referent of "vetch" here should most probably be understood as the same as that of "the Egyptian bean" mentioned in lines 21-22.

d. Smith (*GMPT*, 179 n. 56), interprets this occurrence of preposition *en* with the dative as locative ("*in* the temple of Jerusalem"), the consequent anachronism apparently justifying his famous evaluation of the formula as "pretentious hokum"; but *en* with the dative can just as easily communicate an instrumental nuance, which in fact is more suitable in a context of magico-ritual utterance or oath-making (cf. Acts 16:18) and in this context obviates any sense of anachronism.

e. Cf. *ShR* 2.30-37.

to Hēlios-Sun in the Greek reckoning, • Selēnē-Moon rules the pole, and so also the rest as mentioned here:

The Greek		**•The Seven-Zoned**
• Hēlios-Sun	*The Only of Moses*,	Kronos-Time
[725]Selēnē-Moon	which is also a treatise	Zeus
•Ares	called "The Seven-Zoned."	Ares
•Hermes		Hēlios-Sun
•Zeus		Aphrodite
•Aphrodite		Hermes
[730]Kronos-Time		Selēnē-Moon

Lines 692-93

[692b]Let the natron be written •on (with ink) from both the various kinds of incense and the flowers.

•If you say the name to a demoniac while putting brimstone and asphalt to his nose, •he will speak immediately and the demon will go away.[a]

If you say it over inflamed skin, [245]having smeared the skin with crocodile feces, it will be removed from them immediately.

•If you say the name three times over a sprain or a fracture, •having smeared the area with earth and vinegar, you will remove it.

If you say it •over any bird, into its ear, it will die.

•If you see a cobra and want to make it stay in its place, [250]say "Stay!" while turning yourself to and fro. The four names[b] are said, and it will stay.

To restrain anger: Enter the presence of a king •or other man of high rank, and •say the name of the sun disk while keeping your hands inside your wrap or cloak and tying a knot. You will marvel!

•If you want deliverance from spells: Having written the name on a piece of hieratic papyrus, •wear it.

To call up the sun: Say toward the east, "I am [255]he upon the two cherubim, between the two natures, heaven and •earth, sun and moon, light and darkness, night and day, •rivers and sea. Appear to me, O archangel of those under the natural order, •Lord Hēlios-Sun, the one assigned a position of authority by the One and Only Himself. •The Eternal and Only commands you."[c] Say the name. And if his [260]appearance is marked by sullenness, say, "Give me a day, give an hour, give a month, give •a year,[d] Lord of life." Say the name.

If you want •to kill a snake, say "Stay, for you are Aphyphis."[e] And taking a •fresh palm branch and laying hold of its heart, split it •into two and say the name seven times. Immediately the snake will be split [265]or will burst.

Foreknowledge comes through the operation already mentioned above, •that with the natron. And you will be spoken of as a god,[f] for •on many occasions I have performed the operation when you yourself were present.

---

a. The sense of smell plays a similar role in the broadly exorcistic ritual mentioned in Tob 6:16-17; 8:2-3. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 8.47.

b. The plural here is discordant with the literary co-text; and as noted by Smith (*GMPT*, 179 n. 60), the discordance may be due to the use of a source uninterested in the immediately preceding rites, whose performance involves the invocation of only one name rather than several. However, since a Greek letter *delta*, signifying the number 4, should probably be read instead of the *alpha* proposed by Preisendanz (*PGM*, 2:100, followed by *GMPT*) directly after the symbol for "name," the phrase here can be interpreted more specifically—and coherently—as a reference to the four names mentioned in *PGM* XIII. 746-47: namely "that of nine letters and that of fourteen letters and that of twenty-six letters and that of Zeus." Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxiv-xxv.

c. Cf. lines 335-40. As noted by Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3540, the initiate is assumed in this context to have internalised a culture of spirit possession and, in order to call up Hēlios-Sun, must externalise such beliefs by identifying in the ritual performance with the highest deity in the cosmic order.

d. For three different possible meanings of the verb rendered "give" in this context, see *GMPT*, 179 n. 65; and Preisendanz's parenthetical expansion (*PGM* II.100).

e. The name "Aphyphis" is enigmatic; but whatever the assumed background, the name contributes to an instance of wordplay, with *Aphyphis* (lit. "from a snake") being formally related to the noun used for "snake" (*ophis*) in the same context.

f. Against Preizendanz, *PGM* II.101 (followed by *GMPT*: "the god will talk with you . . . "), the photographic plate of the Greek text indicates that the main verb is not third-person but rather second, with the implied addressee (i.e., "you") rather than "god" being the grammatical subject. The process of acquiring foreknowledge is thus represented as a positive experience of divine spirit possession, the same type of experience promoted for a different ritual purpose in lines 254-60. Cf. Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxv, 44-45.

Invisibility? As follows: •"Come to me, primordial darkness, and hide me, NN, •by order of him who is self-begotten in heaven." Say the name.

[270]Alternatively: "I invoke you alone, the only one in the cosmos who puts •gods and men in their places, who changes himself •into holy forms and makes both existence out of non-existence and •non-existence out of existence, holy Thayth, the •true vision of whose face none of the gods can bear to see. In the eyes of all creatures make me [275]look like a wolf, dog, lion, •fire, tree, vulture, wall, water, or whatever you want; for you are able." •Say the name.

Resurrection of a dead body: •"I put you under oath, spirit wandering about in the air, enter, inspire, •empower, resurrect this body by the power [280]of the eternal god, and let it walk about in this •place; for I am he who acts by the power •of Thayth." Say the name.

If you want •to cross over a river on a crocodile, sit down and say, "Hear me, you who •pass your time in the water. I am he who [285]has leisure in heaven and wanders about in water and in fire and in air •and earth. Return the favour done for you on that day when •I created you and you made your request. You will carry me over to •the other side, for I am NN." Say the name.

Release from chains: Say, •"Hear me, O Chrēstos,[a] in torments; help me in distress, [290]O merciful in times of violence, able to do much in the world, •who created distress and retribution and torment." •Say it twelve times by day after hissing thrice eight times. Say the whole name of Hēlios-Sun beginning from **Achebykrōm**.[b] •"Let every chain be loosed, every •violent force, let every fetter be broken, every rope or every strap, every [295]knot, let every bond be cut open, •and let no one subdue me by violence, for I am"—say the name.

•To quench fire: "Hear, fire, not a mere word but a deed, a deed[c] of divine advantage, •glory of the honoured luminary, be quenched, turn into snow, [300]for the one speaking to you is the eternal one who puts on fire as if •it were asbestos. Let every flame be repelled from me, •every physical element of power, by order of Him who exists forever. •By no means shall you touch me, fire, by no means shall you harm my flesh, •for I am"—say the name.

To make a fire last: "I put you under oath, •fire, divinity of holy love, he who is both invisible and manifold, [305]both unitary and in all places, to last long in •this lamp at this time, shining brightly •and not dying out, •by order of NN"—say the name.

Sending of dreams: •Make a hippopotamus of red wax—it should be hollow—[310]and

---

a. Chiefly because the first vowel of the name in the papyrus is not an iota but rather an ēta (thus not *Christos* but rather *Chrēstos*), the name is understood by Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxv, as conveying no specifically Christian overtones in this context. However, if (as seems likely) this particular formula was added either by the copyist or by a recent editor, and thus close to the middle of the fourth century C.E., one must wonder what cosmic power other than Christ would have been associated with this name. Reference to Christ is supported both by consideration of the name's spelling (*Chrestus*) in Suetonius, *Claudius* 25; and by the possibility of echoes of Acts 16:19-40 in this same formula of release. On the relationship more generally between *Christos* and *Chrēstos*, see BDF §24.

b. The name is spelled variously in XIII. 78-79, 141-47, 446-47, and 590-92, and joined by "Hēlios" in every case except the last.

c. Contra Preizendanz, *PGM* II.102 (followed by *GMPT*), the second occurrence of "deed" (*ergon*) in this line of the manuscript is not in the plural but rather in the singular; see Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, xxv, 44-45.

put into the belly of this beast[a] •both gold and silver and the •so-called castings[b] of the Jews;[c] and dress •him in pure linen and put him in a pure window and, taking [315]a hieratic papyrus leaf, write on it with myrrh-ink and baboon's blood •what dreams one wishes to send. Having rolled it tightly into a wick and •used it to light a new, pure lamp, put •the foot of the hippopotamus on the lamp and say the name, and he sends the dreams.

•A drinkable love-charm: Take lion-wasps that are in a spider's web and, [320]having ground them to a powder over a drink, give it to the chosen victim to drink.

If you want your wife not to be had •by another man, take some soil, •mix ink and myrrh with it, shape it into a crocodile, and put it into a lead funerary urn[d] •and inscribe on the urn the great name and that of your wife and •"Let NN not become sexually intimate with any man except me, NN." The name to be written [325]on the feet of the figure is: **Bibiou Ouēr Apsabara •Kasonnaka Nesebach Sphē Sphē Chphouris.**

•Opening doors by means of the name: "Open, open, four regions of the world, for •the lord of the inhabited world is going out. Archangels •of decans, of angels, rejoice! For the Age of the Age himself, the only and [330]preeminent, is going through the place unseen. Open yourself, •door; listen, bolt; break in half, bar. By the name **Aia Ainruchath**, toss up, Gē-Earth, all things for the master, as much as you have in yourself; •for he is the sender of storms and owner of the nether abyss, ruler •of fire. Open; **Achebukrōm** is speaking to you." Say **Achebukrōm** eight times; it is a name of Hēlios-Sun.[e]

•The spell for Hēlios-Sun by another route: "I am he upon the two cherubim, [335]at the center of the cosmos, of heaven and earth, of light and darkness, of night and day, •of rivers and sea. Appear to me, archangel •of God, placed in authority by the One and Only Himself." With this •spell perform the rites for winning favour, love charms, sending dreams, •requesting dreams, making Hēlios-Sun appear, charms for success, charms for victory, and [340]absolutely everything.

Concluding Claims about the Book Itself (lines 341-43)

•You now possess in full, o child, the holy and fortune-bringing •book *The Only*, which no one hitherto was able to translate or put into practice. •Farewell, child.

---

a. Contra *GMPT*, 181 n. 70, it is not the preceding word rendered "hippopotamus" that is uncertain but rather the word here rendered "beast," whose interpretation in both *GMPT* and Preizendanz, *PGM* II.103 as not merely co-referential but synonymous with "hippopotamus" lacks support.

b. As noted by Smith (*GMPT*, 181 n. 71), the word used here is not attested elsewhere. Its formal resemblance to the verbal part of the biblical phrase for "casting lots" (e.g., LXX 1 Chr 25:8; 26:13) suggests that it might be either an unfamiliar or garbled term for objects used in lot casting.

c. The existence of only four lines rather than the expected five in the present translation of lines 310-14 is the result of dittography in lines 312-13; see Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri*, 46.

d. Contra *GMPT*, 181, an urn rather than a coffin is suggested, both by use of the diminutive variant of the noun and perhaps also by the substance.

e. The last clause of line 333 in the manuscript is a pictograph.

Titular Colophon (lines 731-34)

•*The Secret, Eighth of Moses.* In another manuscript that I found was written, •*The Secret Book of Moses concerning the Great* •*Name*; or, *Concerning Everything to Which Pertains the Name of Him Who Governs* •*All Things.*